

"The Devil"
AND
OTHER PARABLES

ARTHUR B. RHINOW



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“THE DEVIL”

AND

OTHER PARABLES

Truths for the Times

by

Arthur B. Rhinow



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FOREWORD

From the very beginning of literature, the parable or fable has been a favorite vehicle for conveying moral or religious truth, because its direct appeal to human interest gave special force to the indirect suggestion which it carried. Some of the most sublime truths of the Bible are clothed in this form of speech. No other means could have been so effective when it became necessary to reprove David for his great sin in the matter of Uriah the Hittite, nor could any didactic statement about God's willingness to receive penitent sinners have had an effect at all equal to that produced by that immortal piece of literature, the parable of the prodigal son.

It is a matter of satisfaction, therefore, that the parable is coming into its own once more as a means of teaching moral and religious truth to the present generation, which is so desperately in need of religious teaching and at the same time so discouragingly hard to interest in religious thinking. No writer has shown greater skill in this direction during the past few years than Arthur B. Rhinow, pastor of Ridgewood Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, New York, whose beauty and simplicity of style, combined with unusual breadth of sympathy and depth of spiritual in-

sight, has again and again charmed the readers of religious papers in various parts of the country. The present volume is a collection of some of the best products of his pen, including many which have not yet appeared in print, while those which have already been published deserve a thoughtful rereading. The parables cover a wide range of human life and experience and deal with a great variety of subjects which are of perennial interest to thoughtful people.

The courtesy of those periodicals which kindly and readily gave permission to reprint the parables which have appeared in their respective columns (*Christian Century*: The Smile; The Church; The Wise One; A Youthful Fancy; Brother Martin; Tradition; Opium Religion.—*The Continent*: When He Omitted Shadrach's Oration; The Practical Thing; From the Diary of a Modern Minister.—*Christian Endeavor World*: Making Time; During the Brooklyn Car Strike; Elijah; Covering Ground.—*The Outlook*: The Devil.—*Evangelical Herald*: Mr. Alberg's Worry; The Spiritual Man; The Boasters; The Pale Faith; He Felt the Stars Looking at Him; More Time for Herself; Cheap; The Drummer's Disappointment; Going Home; The Joy of Service; The Minister's Malady) is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

St. Louis, Mo., May 21, 1923.

J. H. H.



THE DEVIL



URI Ben Ahithophel came down from Jerusalem to see the Prophet. He wondered why he had retired to the solitude when the people were asking for him. He found him sitting on a stone. A group of men were about him, men with hunger in their eyes.

The scenery was one of contrasts. Rugged hills framing fields of flowers; in the distance the Jordan rushing southward. And the Prophet seemed to blend with it all. But Uri Ben Ahithophel saw none of that.

"I have come to see you about your work," he began.

The Prophet looked up.

"I think your work looks very promising. You have made a good start. Now what you need is somebody to manage your campaign. I have

had a good deal of experience in affairs like that, and I should like to—”

A snake wriggled through the grass and disappeared in the jumble of rocks.

“Now what you need, first of all,” Uri continued after he had recovered, “is to gain the favor of influential people. As I said before, you have begun well. People are talking about you, and you know if you can get people to talk about you you have gained a great deal. They even say you have performed miracles. Now there is no reason why you shouldn’t make a big success of your enterprise. And I say, the first thing to do is to get the backing of influential people.

“Now there is Annas, the high priest, for instance. Believe me, he is the most powerful man in Israel. If you could get him to indorse you, that would help immensely. And of course some prominent Pharisee, also. Annas, you know, is a Sadducee, and you cannot afford to take sides. With two such leaders backing you, you could not fail. And I believe my connections would enable me to enlist that support. One only has to know how to approach men like that in the right way; and I have had experience. All I would ask you to do is not to say or do anything to offend them. That would never do. You understand that, of course. All the rest you can leave to me. And

all I ask of you for myself is a promise to remember me when you enter into your kingdom, so to speak. That's all.

"And believe me, without such men as Annas your enterprise will never amount to very much. Get the right people interested first."

The Prophet studied the lilies lovingly.

"And after you have had the indorsement of those men," Uri went on, "then you ought to be careful about the disciples you choose. Get men that are representative, men of the better classes, men that impress the people. Then you will be able to control means, and you know you cannot do anything without money. For instance, I am just now thinking of a certain rich young ruler. Fine fellow, and he has great possessions."

"The Prophet has chosen his disciples," one of the men answered. There was a deep glow in his eyes, and he held a bag.

"What kind of men are they?" the interviewer asked quickly.

"Oh, Galilean fishermen, a publican, and other men of that kind."

Uri Ben Ahithophel shook his head.

"Fishermen and publicans? That will never do. Why did he choose them?"

"Because they believe in him."

“Well, that’s all right so far as it goes. But this is a practical age, and we must be practical to succeed. Look at the way the Romans do things, and our own politicians. They’re shrewd. And even a religious movement must be conducted in the right way. Imagine how Annas would launch a campaign like that. And it is very important to get the right kind of people to push things. You look as though you might be a help to him, but those other men are just muscle and dreams.”

Uri Ben Ahithophel again turned to the Prophet. He saw him take a reed and write on the ground.

“There is something else I want to talk to you about,” Uri continued. “I have heard people say that you were of Nazareth. Now I wouldn’t advertise that too much. You know the people say, ‘Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?’ And we must avoid anything that might offend the people. ‘Give the people what they want,’ is the way to succeed.

“Now, tell me,” Uri went on, “is there not some other place with which you are associated by ties of something or other?”

“He was born in Bethlehem,” he with the bag volunteered.

Uri Ben Ahithophel leaped up.

“In Bethlehem?” he cried. “The very place! The birthplace of a king.”

“He is of the seed of David.”

“He is? Come, come, this is great. We shall begin the big demonstration at Bethlehem. Leave that to me. We shall advertise you as the son of David. That alone will give you popular applause. We shall speak of the glorious reign of David and Solomon, and that a scion of that illustrious house has come to them to lead them to—”

The Prophet's look silenced Uri Ben Ahithophel. He remained quiet for a long time. At first he had an unearthly feeling, then his mind reverted to the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them. He turned to the man with the glowing eyes.

“Your master might win the whole country,” he said, “if he listened to reason; but—”

He shook his head sadly, and left.

OPIUM RELIGION



WE necessarily treat the news coming from Russia with reserve. If all the reports coming from that land of gloom and mystery were true, Mr. Lenine has more lives than a cat. But there is no reason why we should not comment on the news. Sermons have been preached on texts whose authenticity is questioned by the critics.

We are told that placards have been displayed in Russia, telling the people that religion is the opium of the mind. Therefore discard religion.

This has shocked many, and it certainly is a striking expression. The propaganda department of the Soviet seems to be efficient. What would it not do in case of war? We pity the enemy as we stop to think of it. For example, a slogan like "Kill the Calf," meaning the golden calf, a gentle innuendo against plutocracy; to which the other

side might reply with "Bare the Beast," offering an opportunity for acrid punning. Then, indeed, would the leaders regret having disparaged religion. For a certain kind of religion has always been a factor in mesmerizing the masses into cannon-fodder bravery. Think of what they might draw on in the Apocalypse in preparing for world conquest.

All this I pondered as I leaned back in the old Morris chair, and my eyes began to blink. There were shadows on the wall, and presently I became aware that my old friend, the Guide in many reveries, was with me. We know each other too well to indulge in effusive greeting.

"Surely that is a false statement," I asserted inquiringly.

He knew I referred to the statement that religion is the opium of the mind. He seems to understand me so much more readily than others. He smiled.

"Come with me," he said, "and I'll answer you."

In a moment I was in a study. A slender young clergyman sat in a chair, and looked up eagerly at his brother minister, who was turning the leaves of a book aimlessly.

"That is one of my textbooks," the young man

volunteered. "I matriculated today, and the course begins on Monday. We shall take up the modern trend of philosophy."

The other man frowned.

"What do you want to take up such studies for?" he asked, with towering authority. "You have the whole truth in the Bible. Don't bother about anything else."

The Guide looked at me, and I began to understand.

"That's opium religion," he said. "He has lost the open mind, and with it the open soul. His assurance is narcotic. Who knows only the Bible, does not know it. The Bible touches all of life, and all of life touches the Bible."

Suddenly the scene was changed. The interior of a magnificent church. Arches and domes and beautiful windows. Candles and incense. Now the people bow the head and repeat the Lord's Prayer. After the Amen, one almost hears a pious sigh sweep over the entire congregation, and yet nobody has given thought to the petition of the prayer.

The Guide turned and our eyes met. I understood. That was opium.

He took me into a large room. Many articles were there. Fetishes, totems, idols, amulets. And

all along the sides were shelves and shelves of books, most of them looking like editions de luxe, and all of them covered with dust.

“What are they?” I inquired.

“Those are Bibles that are never opened,” he informed me. “Their owners believe they are religious and under the care of Providence because they have a Bible in the house.”

I nodded. I understood.

Next I was taken to a little garret room, poorly furnished. Before a book sat a man who was reading like one famished. As he looked up, I saw that his cheeks were flushed, and his eyes were aglow with bigotry. Presently a little woman entered the room. She looked spent. He raised his head, and I interpreted the expression on his face as a mixture of resentment at having been disturbed and the pleasure of seeing his wife.

“Ah, if you knew what beautiful thoughts are in this book,” he said ecstatically. “They are heavenly.”

“Beautiful thoughts!” she inveighed, as in desperation. “Why don’t your beautiful thoughts make you do something? Your religion just makes you drunk. And I must make a living for you.”

Then the Guide took me to a portrait gallery. It was peculiar in that every portrait looked like a picture of Siamese twins. One face was proudly poised on fine shoulders, every line indicating confidence and initiative; while the other face, of the same man, was expressive of servile yielding and imitation.

I asked for an explanation.

"These are men who are successful in their professions. There they think for themselves. They have individual opinions on matters of politics and sport and business; but on matters of religion they do not think for themselves. In that realm their pet mottoes are: 'My father and my grandfather were Methodists, and that's why I'm one.' 'The church says so; that settles it.' 'The priest says so; I accept.' 'This passage of Scripture is enough for me.' "

It was an interesting gallery; but we could not stay.

Next I beheld a man leaning languidly against a tree on a very high precipice. Before him in the valley lay the city. On one side of the stream were mansions; on the other hovels. There was hauteur and hatred and crime. In the far distance a battle was being fought.

But the man saw none of these. His mind was fixed on a vision of peace and bliss he saw

in the sky ; and he muttered to himself, "This alone is real."

We seemed to travel through the air. Then I saw millions and millions of people. They looked like sheep having no shepherd. They could neither read nor write. On their faces I saw the expression of stupid piety. Priests and monks moved among them. They were dressed in long robes, and some of the people tried to kiss the hems of their garments.

"This is called the God-fearing people," the Guide remarked.

"Why, this is Russia," I exclaimed.

And I awoke.

THE MINISTER OF THE CHURCH IN THE OTHER BLOCK



FATHER:—"Now, my boy, I want to give you a bit of advice. Mother has gone to the fruit store, and we are alone. So we can speak as man to man."

(The boy settles down in his chair, arranges the creases of his trousers, rests the ankle of his right leg on the knee of his left leg, caresses his silk sock, almost the identical shade of his tie, and with constrained patience prepares to listen to one of father's outbursts of intimate oratory. Father is wonderfully fluent in the bosom of his family, where he usually occupies the "chair" and the "floor" at the same time, though he is extremely different outside of his home.)

Son:—"All right."

Father (giving tone-quality to his voice):—

“You are now at the age when a youth ought to think of choosing his profession. Now, I am not going to tell you what profession to choose, but I want to impress upon you to be courteous to a certain profession. I mean the ministry. Do you understand?”

(The son looks mystified, but his nod indicates that he vaguely understands.)

“Now, the other day I saw you bumping into the minister of the church in the next block. You know where I mean. And you were so busy with the strings of your tennis racket that you hardly looked up, and I believe you failed to excuse yourself.”

Son:—“I said, ‘Excuse me.’”

Father:—“Well, I am glad to hear it. But don’t interrupt me. I guess your father has a right to speak to you.”

Son:—“Oh, certainly.” (He changes his position and begins to caress the other sock.)

Father:—“I have always held that ministers must be treated with respect. Now, you can do a great deal to help that cause along, William. You are a brilliant boy. Of course, those last reports you brought home from high school were not exactly,—well, you know what I mean; but I believe it’s just as you said. The teacher dislikes

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you. I would rather believe my child than any teacher. Now, as I said, you have a brilliant future."

(The boy has caught sight of the sporting page of the Sunday newspaper, spread out on the table. The father believes his son's face is averted to give better attention.)

Father (continues, tenderly):—"You may be president of a railroad some day, William. In that case, see to it that ministers get half fare. Or you may become the head of a large mercantile establishment. Then be sure to let the ministers have the customary discount. If you become a professional man—a doctor, a dentist, or a lawyer—don't charge the minister for your services. I heard an undertaker say only the other day, speaking of a certain minister, that he would be glad to bury him free of charge. Or if you become a gentleman farmer—the future is veiled, you know—always supply the village parsonage with plenty of vegetables.

"You see, the minister is in a class of his own. Without churches we would soon drop to lower levels, and the minister is the leader. We ought to encourage him in every way. Now, I must confess I was annoyed when I saw you bump into the minister of the church in the next block, and I am glad you apologized."

Son:—"What kind of a church is that, father?"

Father:—"That church?" (Takes off his glasses and thinks hard.) "Well, I'll be switched. To think of it. A man as observant as I am. Well, you know how busy I am.—I think it's a Methodist church, though it might be a United Presbyterian or an Episcopal church."

Son:—"It's not Catholic. He doesn't wear that kind of a collar."

Father:—"Yes, I believe you are right. But I really couldn't tell you offhand what kind it is. Ask mother; she knows. I don't get to church very often, you know; but" (with unctuous emphasis) "I believe in encouraging the minister."

DURING THE BROOKLYN CAR STRIKE



“YES, sir,” said the iceman to no one in particular. Rather was his remark designed to be of benefit to all within reach of his voice, and he made sure to give it carrying-power. He was always audible. If he had no one else to talk to, he would air his sentiments to his horses; and they were very patient.

On this occasion, however, his horses were not present. They were in the stable. He had discovered something more lucrative than peddling ice. Not that he would neglect his customers, but they would have to wait. If they complained, he would talk to them.

The fact was, the motormen and the conductors of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company were

out on a strike, and whoever owned an automobile or a truck was engaged in carrying passengers to and from New York, charging prices that were right in his own eyes. And the iceman had taken his seven-passenger machine from the garage and joined the joyriders; that is, it was a joy to the owners. And so he stood there, near the curb, arguing, and occasionally urging passengers to step right into his car.

“Yes, sir,” he repeated. “Talking of profiteering, I can’t see why the Government don’t get after those robbers. They are robbers. Look at the way they used us common people when the war was on.

“Step right in lady. We’re going to start as soon as I have enough people in the car. And that won’t be long, you bet.—How much? Fifty cents to the Bridge.—What? Too much? Well, you don’t have to, you know; but I guess you do have to. Of course you can ride in one of them trucks and stand all the way. Ha, ha! I guess you’d better step right in.—Thank you, lady.

“Now, take the price of butter and eggs, for instance. You know, they’ve got butter and eggs stacked in them cold-storage houses by the million, just to keep up the price. Where’s the Government? That’s what I say.

“Fifty cents, Mister.—Too much? Well, now,

you see I can get it. And why shouldn't I, while the getting's good?—All right; I knew you'd come. It's a fine-riding car, too.

“Look at shoes. Of course, we had to ship a lot of hides to Europe. That's so. The boy over in the shoe-store told me that himself. But you can't tell me that shoes have to be as high in price as they are today. That's nothing but profiteering. That's all. And I don't see why Congress don't get after them.

“All right! Step in, gentlemen.—Fifty cents.—What? Why, I heard of a man that had to pay two dollars to go from Myrtle and Broadway to Flatbush. And at first the chauffeur wanted three dollars. I ought to charge more. Maybe I'm a fool. The people will pay. They've got to go to New York. You must take things as they come. That's what I say.

“Yes, sir, those robbers, those food barons. The farmers is getting more than their share, too; but I won't say much to that. But take flour. Why, I could tell you some stories. I got a brother living in Minneapolis. And coal. Do you know, I believe there's lots of coal? And they're holding it back to screw up the price. Those profiteers ought to be strung up. Anyhow, they ought to go to the Island.

“Just in time, ladies. Just two more seats

left.—Fifty cents.—That's what I said. And tomorrow I'll charge more.—But you want to get there in time, don't you?—Well, then, in you go. I tell you it's cheap at that.—Everybody's doing it.

“Just think of it. They're telling me that a suit of clothes will be ninety dollars next winter. What do you think of that? Profiteers, robbery! And where's the Government?—Well, so-long.”

While cranking the car, he rubbed his eye. Maybe he was trying to remove the beam.

THE MINISTER'S MALADY



strange malady had seized the Rev. Carter Kellogg. His wife tried to keep the knowledge of it from the people just as long as she could, but finally it had leaked out. Their beloved and dignified pastor!

The ladies' aid society demanded to be taken into confidence, and Mrs. Kellogg told the story, moistening every word with tears, after which she bent her gray head and covered her face with hands whose delicacy told of the starved cravings of culture.

The malady had developed gradually, and at first the dear little queen of the parsonage and her daughters, Antoinette and Esther, were inclined to treat it humorously. As it recurred month after month, however, they resented it, and finally they became sadly aware that father's brain was affected in a most unusual manner.

The family physician, Dr. Jack Antony Jackson, was puzzled. He stroked his beard meditatively for a long while, and yet he was puzzled. He had known Mr. Kellogg for many years and never dreamt of such a thing. He consulted a colleague of a neighboring town and at first indignantly rejected that gentleman's advice, but finally yielded.

Dr. Mosby suggested that the minister be followed on his recreation day, which, as a rule, he spent in the city. This seemed to be sinister, he admitted, but it was necessary, as modern medical diagnosis as well as the art of the detective proceeded along the lines of elimination. Dr. Jackson acquiesced, not because he was a little man and his colleague a large man, but because any theory was welcome. He was perplexed.

At the same time they decided to call in the New York specialist Dr. Felton Crosby, who was eminent in spite of his boyish face. He immediately inspired the ladies with confidence by telling them the Latin name of what he thought was the malady.

After they had heaved their sigh of comfort, they watched the great doctor with hopeful scrutiny, and soon suspected him of having a working theory. Which, indeed, he had.

He was known for his duplicity in that he

would nod approvingly at a colleague's diagnosis, but would at the same time follow a theory of his own. He would excuse himself by claiming that his clues were of purely intuitive origin and would most likely be scorned by men who were accustomed to reason slowly and carefully according to the rules of scientific analysis.

While, therefore, tacitly encouraging the suggestion that the minister be followed with the view to finding the source of his idiosyncrasy in some craving for amusement, he set to work along his own line, using his theory, intuitively given, as a working hypothesis. He began to question people that were intimately acquainted with the pastor, beginning with the members of his family. Before very long he was aware of another intuition. He was fond of deep things and he found Antoinette's eyes unfathomable. He seemed to see them everywhere, even when his own eyes followed her as she left the room with the grace of one whom self mastery and mastery of others has made a princess.

But what was the minister's malady? We are reluctant in giving an account of it, for we are afraid it will prove mirth-provoking, while it was indeed very serious.

Mr. Kellogg's salary was one hundred dollars a month, besides the free use of the parsonage.

Of this amount he gave his wife eighty dollars, according to a friendly understanding, while he kept twenty dollars for himself. Up to within six months he had always cheerfully surrendered his wife's allowance, 'always deploring that his own expenses were so high, economical though he was. But they got along very well, as well as ministers' families usually get along, and by the time the prices began to soar, Antoinette had found a position in the village high-school, and Esther, the vivacious girl who claimed to be able to love the world without loving the flesh and the devil, earned a handsome salary as bookkeeper of the only factory in town.

One day when mother reminded father that he had not yet given her the money, he looked defiant.

"You're not going to get that money out of me so easily," he answered.

The mother looked amazed, seconded by her daughters.

"Why, what do you want us to do?" Esther asked. Business life had developed a ready tongue.

"I want you to go through a performance before I hand over the money."

They thought it was a joke, and immediately

began to contribute to what they regarded a fine bit of domestic hilarity. Antoinette recited the Dying Gladiator, and Esther executed a new set of calisthenics that came dangerously close to the Terpsichorean, after which the three ladies sang "The Same Old Ocean Washes East and West," one of the popular successes of the better kind.

"Now will you let mother have the money?" Antoinette asked her father, who seemed to be pleased with the performance. He shook his head stubbornly.

"Where are the refreshments?" he asked.

They laughed, and Esther went out for some ice cream. After they had eaten, father receiving a liberal portion, he handed his wife the eighty dollars with a smile.

That was fun. But when he demanded a similar program every month, only ever more exacting, the family became alarmed. Something was wrong. They kept the secret for a long while, but finally it became like little Moses. It could no longer be hid. Then they consulted the physician.

The two physicians had the minister followed during his recreation days in the labyrinthine city. A semi-professional who had recently graduated with honors from a detective correspon-

dence school, had offered his services, and he was very serious in his work. He made note of the fact that Mr. Kellogg walked up Broadway for almost an hour, watching the people and the show-windows. Then he went into Wanamaker's, ate a hearty meal, and stayed for the afternoon concert. So far he had seen nothing unusual.

The minister then left the department store and strolled along one of the side streets, evidently lost in thought. He came upon a church, still respectable looking, though it had evidently seen better days, for a canvas sign announced a social and supper for the benefit of the current expense fund. The minister stood and stared as though fascinated by the church, then turned away as with a wrench and ran as fast as his weight would allow, until he could turn the corner. The detective had a hard time keeping up.

After the church was out of sight, the runner became a panting walker. He mopped his face, looked at his watch, walked to the station, and after a little wait boarded a train for home.

When the detective made his report, the two physicians looked at each other gravely, and nodded with weighty sagacity. For a minister to run away from a church—that certainly looked suspicious.

They told their findings to Dr. Crosby. That

gentleman had spent a day in the village making inquiries of members of the church, and using a good deal of time in questioning Antoinette, who looked embarrassed but not very much spent by the ordeal. It was surprising how much information the nerve specialist got from Antoinette.

"What did Mr. Crosby ask you?" Mrs. Kellogg inquired of her daughter.

"Oh, so much. He's a heart specialist, too."

"Is he? Does he think something is the matter with father's heart?"

"No."

"No? that's good."

After the two physicians had made their report to the specialist, they ventured an opinion. They thought the minister needed watching.

"I think he needs a vacation," was his reply.

"Well, now," ventured Dr. Jackson, "don't you think it is suspicious for a minister to run away from a church?"

"It is," Dr. Crosby drawled. "But what will you say when you see him run away from his own church?"

Their eyes were interrogative.

"Be patient with me just a little longer," he pleaded, "I think I understand the case. I am a

minister's son. And I am interested in Dr. Kellogg. He has such a lovely—family. I cannot explain to you right now. Be patient a little longer.”

They nodded. They knew him.

The next Sunday morning, the early arrivals for the church service were surprised to find a large sign announcing an oyster supper with songs, drills, and other attractions, for the benefit of the church. There was much questioning as to who had arranged for such an evening's entertainment, though no one questioned the propriety of it. They were used to it.

Automobile after automobile arrived, the hubub grew more voluminous. At one corner of the shed Dr. Crosby was talking to his colleagues.

“There comes the minister,” said one of the young men.

Mr. Kellogg walked slowly, his massive head bent in meditation. He had a fine face with strong features. He approached the church, bowing friendly greetings to his parishioners. When he saw the sign he stared, pressed his hands to his head, turned about, and ran up the street toward his house.

The people were astonished, and the physicians nodded approvingly at Dr. Crosby.

That specialist mounted the steps of the church and raised his hand, beckoning silence.

"Friends," he began, "I have concluded my diagnosis of your pastor's malady. I have been greatly helped by my colleagues and by the fact that I am a minister's son.

"I have learned by diligent inquiry that you have raised much of the money to meet the church expenses by entertainments and fairs, and this has finally gotten on your pastor's nerves. It has affected him in a two-fold manner. On the one hand he is so disgusted with such means of securing the church's revenue that he runs away from every church bearing a sign announcing an entertainment or bazaar. On the other hand a subtle, subconscious reasoning tells him that as he does not receive his money without entertainment, he ought not to give it without entertainment.

"Now, my dear friends, I am very much, I am personally interested in this case." Very few noticed the blush. "And I want to help. Your pastor needs a vacation. I have a mountain lodge in the Adirondacks. There he will soon recover. And I hope to be able to make him feel at home in that lodge as often as he cares to make use of it." It was probably the excitement that again colored his face.

"But you must do your share. I have found

out how much my—your pastor is to you. You must make him feel at home. Less suppers and bazaars to raise his salary. You must become givers, proportionate givers, as the Lord has prospered you. We all have been stingy with the church. We have treated it more shabbily than our coffee merchant.”

The calm that followed the bold speech grew intense when the people saw Dr. Crosby offer his arm to Antoinette and both walk toward the parsonage. Then, however, the storm broke loose. But it cleared the atmosphere for a finer day in the good old church and for a higher appreciation of the beloved minister.

THE JOY OF SERVICE



It was very quiet in the church, the clock only keeping up its continual tick-tock. The pews stood about like rows of veteran soldiers, not saying a word; the organ seemed asleep; and the Bible presided with silent dignity.

Now, however, a whispering was heard in one of the corners, where a hymn-book had carelessly been left in a pew.

"You have no business here," said the pew. "Why are you not with the stack?"

"I don't know," answered the hymn-book, "but I don't see that you have anything to say about it. You are not my superior. What do you do to entitle you to such mastery?"

"What do I do? Why, without me the people could hardly stand the service, especially if it were long. I afford rest to the worshipers."

"I know," answered the hymn-book, with a superior smile; "you ask people to sit down, but I give them something that makes them feel like rising and fighting a good fight."

"You are putting on airs," the pew sneered.

"That well becomes me; and my airs have helped thousands."

Their quarrel had become loud enough to rouse the organ from its drowse, and it had heard the last remark also.

"Do you remember," the organ said to the hymn-book, "the last time the people tried to sing your airs without me? It was a miserable failure. What would the church do without me!"

"But I am older than you," the hymn-book proudly replied. "People sang before they had you."

A ray of sunshine, which had been listening, now joined the speakers.

"Talking of age," it said in its kind way, "I can say that I am older than you all."

"Older than I?" asked the Bible.

"Oh, much older," answered the ray.

The hymn-book and pew still glared at each other, and the Bible was just about to tell the ray of its ancient days, when it heard footsteps, and said, "Hush!"

A group of children entered the church. Men and women followed. The organist arrived and began to play. Then the organ felt happy. "If only I can please him and the people, today," it said.

A rich man sat down in the quarrelsome pew, and as he came down with a sigh of satisfaction, the pew felt good to have pleased some one. The man took the hymn-book and was about to open it when he saw a poor woman, sitting near him, who had no book. He walked over to her, and handed her his own, and when the poor woman looked thankful both the rich man and the hymn-book were glad to have made some one happy. And when, during the singing, the poor woman dropped a tear on the book, it did not mind it at all.

A cloud passed over the sun, and the old men and women could not read. But in a few moments the bright rays again burst through the windows, and they looked so cheerful, no doubt, because they could fill others with cheer.

When the pastor opened the Bible, and said, "I shall read you a chapter from the Book of Life," all the people were eagerly listening, some of them as though they were hungry for the words. Then the Bible no longer thought of its antiquity; it just felt happy in giving its comforting secrets to sad and seeking hearts.

And thus they all were happy in serving. And their quarrel? What was it they were quarreling about?

THE RING



HE feasting was over, and the last sounds had retired, leaving a kiss on the sunken but now flushed cheeks of the prodigal. The night was beautiful.

The brothers were alone. The elder was less sullen, but not yet reconciled.

“But why the ring?” he demanded.

The prodigal looked up questioningly.

“The ring?” he repeated, as though groping to understand.

“Yes, the ring.” The eyes were defiant, but they softened when he saw the marks of his brother’s suffering.

“I can understand why father gave you a new robe, for you were in tatters; and sandals, for your feet were bare and bruised; and food, for you were famished. But a ring? Did you need a ring?”

The prodigal looked away, out at the stars, his companions of many a night, when he was homeward bound, rehearsing his confession. They seemed to understand.

He did not answer, but he kissed the ring.

The elder brother urged.

"Why the ring?" the prodigal answered softly. "Brother, I was in need of the ring more than anything else."

The elder brother was puzzled.

"I was thankful for the robe and the sandals and food; but, when my hand felt the ring, I knew I had my father's love, the old love of my childhood. I was accepted not as a hired servant, but as his child."

The wind was whispering to the palms, and the elder brother began to feel the beauty of the night. The prodigal touched his brother's arm.

"I have come back to you and father and to God. And, brother, God too gave me a ring. He gives not merely things and thoughts. He gives his love, himself, to those that need him and want him."

God is not merely a system of laws or an unconscious soul of the universe. He is the Father, a person; and he offers his children the ring of his love. And that is just what we need.

TRADITION



JOHN Stone purchased a rare old volume from an antiquarian. He had it carefully cleaned by expert hands, and was delighted with the cover. The contents of the book related to medieval fables, and were of little value. Ah, but the cover! The beauty of the grained leather was set off by slightly impressed points and lines of gold, and in the middle was stamped a picture of David with his harp. A bibliophile told Mr. Stone that the volume might have belonged to Jean Grolier, a famous collector in the time of Francis I.

The owner was very much impressed.

"This must become an heirloom in the Stone family," he mused.

He admired the cover over and over again, and came to the conclusion that so rare a treasure ought to be protected. He decided to have it

covered. So he asked a book-binder to rebind it in soft leather.

When it was finished it was very presentable. The color was a rich maroon, and the workmanship was perfect. Mr. Stone, however, was not satisfied. While the second cover was to be merely a protection, he thought it ought to be ornamental enough to serve as an introduction to the beauty of the original, so to speak. Of course, very few besides himself knew of the treasure beneath the maroon, and very few were to know it, but even the exterior of a book of that value ought to be artistic. So he had an artist paint a coat of arms on it, a conception of his own, in which a stone figured prominently.

John Stone died suddenly. His son, Henry Stone, found the book and was delighted with the cover. He found the volume in the private drawer of his father's desk, and he concluded that the book had been very dear to him. Of course, he would keep it and cherish it as an heirloom. In fact, it was too precious to be left unprotected. So he made up his mind to have it covered with a cloth binding. Just as a protection, to be sure, but secure, as artistic as possible, for the volume, so dear to his father, was precious to him. The bookbinder, cautioned and encouraged by promises of reward, did his very best, so that even

Henry Stone was delighted. It was too sacred a matter to talk of to any one, and the volume was locked away. War broke out, and Henry Stone died on the field of battle.

“Look at this volume of old legends,” the executor said to young Samuel Stone. “What a thick cover; but a pretty one. Your father must have thought a great deal of the old book. He kept it with his valuables.”

Samuel Stone agreed that it was a pretty cover. And he revered the book. On the title page he found the names of his father and grandfather, and the volume became venerable to him. He decided to have it covered.

“Just to protect the cover,” he confided to the binder; “but, of course, firm enough to give it a permanent appearance.”

The binder was going to make objections, but he was cut short by Samuel, whose possessions made him a man of authority. It was just a paper cover, but it was beautiful. The color was a soft purple, and the names of John Stone, Henry Stone, and Samuel Stone were embossed in gold, truly a royal combination. The craftsman was paid a handsome sum, and the book was laid aside in a safe place.

Samuel Stone was hot-blooded. Books had little attraction for him. He was sorry there were

no wars at the time. He tried to satisfy his passions in various ways, and finally died of a sword cut received in a duel.

One day the widow sat by the fire and wept over a beautifully bound book which the man of law had handed her. The three names embossed on the cover were dear to her, especially the last, that of her husband. Charles Stone, heir to the estate, sat on the floor, carving a boat, despite the gentle protests of his mother. He had the stubborn spirit of the Stones.

As she wept, she laid the book on a chair beside her, and gave rein to memory. The cover attracted the boy. What in all the world was finer to try his new knife on than this pretty book. A longing seized him to cut out those bright letters and play with them. So he cut, and cut deeply.

"Charles, what are you doing?" the mother cried in alarm. "The heirloom! Oh, how could you! This book was very precious to your father. He revered it. He kept it with the jewels of the family."

Charles did not understand, but he was anxious for further developments. Meanwhile the mother noticed another cover beneath the pretty one, and another beneath that. She wondered. The butler asked an expert antiquarian to call.

When the latter came and began to peel, his cheeks flushed. He removed the paper cover, and they beheld the cloth cover. He removed the cloth cover, and they saw the leather with the artistic coat of arms of almost a hundred years ago. That was taken off, and their eyes feasted on the quiet beauty of the original.

The antiquarian was enrapt.

“And to think of it,” he exclaimed. “Each generation revered a layer of less value.”

“EVEN AS A HEN”



HIS morning there was a commotion in the chicken run that threatened to become truculent.

For several days we had kept the little chicks that had peeped and labored their way out of the white shells, unappreciative of the brooding warmth, in the sun room; and although a few of them died, the rest thrived nicely. For the adults as well as the children it was a succession of thrills to see the little ones gathered under the wings of the mother hen, a wonder that gave a figure of speech to the yearning and burning love of Jesus.

Last night, however, we domiciled the hen and her brood in the little coop in the corner of the run. When the morning brightened, the chickens of the main compartment filed out, the hens demurely as beseems them, and the roosters with stately poise, which seems to be their prerogative.

From the smaller coop at the other end of the enclosure emerged the mother hen with her chicks, just about four days old. The other chickens were surprised. Evidently there were two armies in one camp. And a deep though erroneous instinct told them they were hostile armies. What made them think so is very hard to tell, for there was room enough for all of them. To ruminate on the origin of that instinct would land us in very deep water, and not everybody can swim. The writer himself is well aware of his limitations. Suffice it to say that this instinct antedates chickens and has not yet been overcome by man.

However, they stood there and glared at each other.

The older hens and roosters said, “What do these newcomers want? Dispute our realm? Scratch on the soil that belongs to us? Eat of the food that is given to us? They have no business here. We rule here; they are usurpers. This is our country; they are foreigners. Out with them.”

And the mother of the little ones said, “I know they hate my brood, my darling brood. I know they will peck them and kill them if I do not defend them.”

And although she had never attended a mili-

tary school, she resolved at once to defend by attacking.

She attacked with fury. The history of the initial onslaught will never be written, as the reporters, strange to say, had had no inkling, and the film man was absent. Battles are still fought in the world that are missed by the movie enterprise.

When one of us arrived, being drawn by the tumult of battle, she saw the mother hen drag one of the other hens through the dust, the rest of the enemy huddled in the corner, cackling and crowing in horror.

Now, according to reliable statistics, there were seven full grown chickens on the one side. That is to say, the hens were old enough to encourage their owners to regard the laying of the first egg as imminent, and the roosters were beginning to crow. This, however, is where the reliability of statistics ceases. We are not yet sure just how many of them are roosters, even though they have been under observation for a long time. We had picked out one, but some of the neighbors smiled at our being so unsophisticated. They pointed out at least three roosters. And the other day, a minister from a neighboring church called, on a purely professional matter. He is a musician

and a married man, and he knows a great deal about the harmonies of life.

He looked through the wire screening, blinked, and looked again, and then asserted that in his opinion there were four roosters and three hens. Of course, he assured us, he had no zeal in the matter and would not endeavor to force his opinion on us, but he could not well do otherwise than stand by what he conscientiously regarded as the truth.

What could we do? We could not be discourteous to our visitor, especially as he is a stout man and the mental concentration had made him perspire. Besides, he might be right. On the other hand, it would not do to antagonize the neighbors, who are very close to us in New York, almost upon us.

So we were silent, the more as the exact number of roosters will not materially affect the moral of the story. Let us compromise and say there were three. There they stood in all their masculine strength and pride, the hens looking to them for leadership in strategy and attack, and not a Foch among them. Huddled in a heap, they crowded into the corner, smitten with fear. Had it not been for the wire wall, the possibilities of their flight would have been infinite, at least several blocks.

Four hens and three roosters cowed. By what? By one hen. And what made her so formidable? A great cause. A mother defending her children. I suppose in war we call that morale; inspired by the cause for which one fights, making one man equal to five.

That is why it has happened a thousand times in the course of history, when Biam declared war on Triam, that they did not tell the people, the fighters, the real cause of the war, namely, some weak monarch's wounded vanity or the aggrandisement of the House of Highlivers, but they invited a "patriotic" cause, often nothing more than a balderdash slogan of the flag and the defence of the country. It was almost always made out to be a defensive war. Something like Demos-thenizing the earth to take possession of the moon lest the strong races of some other planet get there first and turn off the light, leaving us nothing but starlight for our evening strolls through the country.

Such fictitious causes will lose their drawing power, however. They have almost lost them now. If ever again a nation wants to hurl its subjects into a cruel conflict without a cause that is obviously just, the leaders will have to be very inventive to find a pretext that will fool the people. Republics may have the advantage, because they

have more general elections, and elections furnish excellent opportunities for slogan camouflage. On the other hand the people will be the better trained in detecting deceit. However, we venture to predict the addition of a secretary of slogans to the various cabinets in the event of another great war.

But that does not invalidate the theory that a great cause inspires us with wonderful strength. Look at Thermopylae, at the Ironsides of Cromwell, the Swiss in their mountains of freedom, look at the Geusen of Holland, look at Valley Forge.

And behold the prophets who defied kings and nations, the apostles who obeyed God more than men, the Savonarolas making princes quake. Follow the martyr trail of the missionaries, all red and gold. The inspiration of a great cause is the secret of their heroism. They found life worth while because they lived for something worth while.

FROM THE DIARY OF A MODERN MINISTER



MONDAY, February 28—Bad case of brain-fag this morning. But I expected it. I preached so hard yesterday that I was tired out. I must find more time for preparing. Whenever I am poorly prepared I preach hard. When I am well prepared, I am at ease. Some people compliment me, but I know better. And when old Mrs. Grimm, good old soul, told me she always feels edified by the sound of my voice, I felt ashamed of myself. Well, Easter is near, I intended to preach a series of sermons on the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. I shall be ready.

Ready for my stroll this afternoon. Going into the woods to study barks and leaves. Mr. Swift just called up and said that Mr. and Mrs. Burns had not been in church for two Sundays

and he had heard that they were disgruntled about something. And that Sam Taylor had been absent from his Sunday school class for several weeks. I shall have to see him. He is a good worker, but so easily offended.

Dropped in to see the Burnses on my way to the woods—but I never got to the woods. Spent two hours with Mrs. Burns. Told me she and her husband stayed away to see if they would be missed. She thinks our people are very cold, and there is too much favoritism shown in our church. Told me about the church they belonged to before they came to us. There the people are so different; they are so cordial, and it was “Mrs. Burns here and Mrs. Burns there.” And the services were so impressive. The minister always came to church in a silk hat. When I asked her why she left there, she just answered: “Oh, well—.” I think she will be in church next Sunday.

Wonder if there are any violets in the woods.

Went to the supper of the Pollyanna Club tonight. I didn't know they wanted me to make an address, but I might have expected it. The ladies all said it was a fine speech; but what did I say? Something about a silver lining; that's all. But I guess that is what they want; though, really, it's the cloud itself that brings the blessing.

Now about my sermon. Oh, well, I still have

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five days. Hope I sleep well tonight. But I wish I could have been with the barks and leaves.

Tuesday, March 1—Thought I could spend a morning in my study. It is as dear to me as any place in the world. A telephone call urges me to come to the Home for the Aged. Some trouble there; work for the committee on discipline.

Returned in time for lunch. Spent the whole morning in the Home. Some of the members of the committee were late, and the case was complicated.

Did not look at my mail this morning. Now that I do, it is all bills, and the budget of the month is heavy—heavy for a minister. Feel cross at the thought of always being in cramped circumstances. Even my books irritate me.

Funeral of Henry Moulder. A few calls. Meeting of the men's club. Well, tomorrow morning I'll start on my sermon.

Wednesday, March 2—Much mail, most of it from the boards and committees of the General Council. Almost every letter marked "important." I felt that I ought to read it all, though it took time. Also questionnaires for the annual report of the church. This will mean much work.

Mr. Spencer brought me a book and asked me to read it if I would be so kind. "As soon as pos-

sible, please." Because he had had an argument with a friend who had been captivated by the contents. I promised to read it. It may open an opportunity for pastoral work.

Read part of the book. Written by a western clergyman who tries to prove with subtlety and boldness, mostly the latter, that the impending coming of Christ is not the second but the third. The book is shot through with Bible verses. The writer waxes warm over his subject, and his invectives against the "second-comers" are sixteen-inch shells. Now, I hope nobody will try to prove that the expected coming is the fourth. But I guess the third-comers will have their day; everything presented with boldness has its day.

I am glad Christ has come to me.

Called on Elizabeth Wellen, poor cripple. Prayer meeting. I'll try to think of my sermon in bed. But I'm afraid I'll soon fall asleep; I am tired.

Thursday, March 3—Papers are full of preparations for inauguration day. Good introduction to my sermon, showing the difference between the president coming to Washington and Christ entering Jerusalem. I know some will call it catchy. But I want more. I'd like to preach a good sermon next Sunday.

Painter called to see the church, in order to

give an estimate on interior decorating. Had a long talk with him. Prided himself on the piety of his wife's relations.

Meeting of the ladies' aid society. The chairman asked for my views on the coming May fair, and elicited my promise to help. My views applauded. Oh, I am popular; but I often feel as though I were missing the real thing. I'll have to get at my sermon tomorrow.

Attended a meeting of the Red Cross advisory council. Suggested that I might send a representative to take my place, but the offer was not approved. "It is your personality we want, Reverend."

Friday, March 4—Papers are full of the inauguration festivities. Was "visited" by the most genial book agent I have ever met. I was adamant to all his blandishments and arguments, but I almost broke down when I saw his look of utter commiseration. To think of depriving myself of so valuable an addition to my library! To think of foregoing the equipment of the Ancient and Modern Encyclopedia of Homiletics! Now, however, after some reflection, I believe he will recover. Wondered if we ought not to be as aggressive. But we certainly cannot use the same methods, we have a different commodity. The best way of doing our work is to let the divine stream

flow through us into other hearts. And that would rather preclude the aggressiveness of the drummer.

Mr. Anderson telephoned, asking me over to his place to discuss the Easter Sunday school program.

Received a letter from Mrs. De Mott, telling me that she would have to leave the church if we received that "impossible" Mrs. Walberg. Said she had trouble with her in her former church. "Utterly incompatible." That is a problem. Mrs. Walberg seems to be a refined woman of quiet force, but I should not like to see Mrs. De Mott leave. She has a following.

Spoke at the Christian Endeavor rally in Allison Memorial church. Came home late, but sat in my study for a little while to brood over my sermon.

Saturday, March 5—Went to placate Mrs. De Mott. Called on her in the morning to make sure to find her in. She certainly has a splendid repertoire to characterize persons with whom she is on terms of incompatibility. She dislikes Mrs. Walberg, but all the reasons she gives for doing so amount to "because." Her antipathy evidently has some hidden spring. How candor would lubricate the wheels of life.

Alexander Small called just as I was going to

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settle down to work on my sermon. He represents the Boy Brothers, a new organization for boys, with military, gymnastic, outdoor, literary and also religious features. Took two hours of my time to impress on me the necessity of introducing this organization, the Bee Bees, into my church. No church is up to date without it, it fills a long felt want, and surpasses everything that has ever gone before. I told him we had too many organizations now, but he smiled and assured me that Boy Brothers was something different. When he left, I found myself perspiring.

I shall have to stay up late tonight to work on my sermon.

I had forgotten. Mr. Clarke came and reminded me of the committee on new hymn books. The men could not meet at any other time.

Just got home. It is late. Find notices on my desk earnestly soliciting my presence at the community council executive session on Tuesday afternoon, at the luncheon of the Mighty Good Club Wednesday noon, and at the meeting of the committee of twenty-five on Friday evening, to prepare for the union revival services to be conducted by Tom Tussler, the converted prizefighter, and Blind Jennie, the girl evangelist.

Tomorrow's sermon—the Lord help me!

THE PRACTICAL THING



THE Secretary of the National Emergency Commission looked up from his papers, turned in his swivel chair, and asked the stenographer to take a letter.

"I want this letter to go to all the churches in the country," he said with fine feeling.

After a pucker and a gaze into the unseen he began to dictate.

"To the Churches of America.

"Dear Friends,

"It is with profound gratitude that the men in public life, particularly the men of large responsibility in the late crisis, acknowledge their indebtedness to the churches for their splendid cooperation in the emergencies of the cruel war, including their help in the various drives: Liberty Loan, Red Cross, Y. M. C. A., Y. W. C. A., Salvation Army, and others.

"Indeed, we believe that without your valued assistance, moral and material, the final outcome of the war would have been doubtful. We feel more than ever that we need the church.

"Allow us to assure you of our highest appreciation. The history of these trying years will have to report that the churches were tried and not found wanting."

There was a pause. The brow puckered again, and the eyes gazed intently.

"That letter isn't complete. I want to say something else." He addressed partly the window shade and partly the stenographer. "I would like to say something striking; something practical. Can't you suggest something?"

As the window shade remained silent, the stenographer felt it incumbent upon himself to reply. He coughed.

"Would you care to say that in view of your recognition of the high value of the church, the public men feel themselves morally obliged to become more regular in their attendance of church services? I know the churches would like—."

"Well, I—I don't—you see— By the way, what time is it?— What do you think of that? I am late for my appointment. Put that letter aside for the present. We'll take it up again, when I have a convenient season."

BROTHER MARTIN



UTHER is drowsy. He is working on his war sermon against the Turks, for the enemy of Christendom has reached the walls of Vienna, and Europe trembles. Did not Constantinople fall less than a hundred years ago?

On the old desk, before him, lies the manuscript, every letter bearing testimony to a masterful hand. He calls the Turks Gog and Magog, and appeals to his countrymen to fight the common enemy with the bravery displayed by their forefathers in staying the Romans. He asks them to march under the banner of the emperor, to whom God has entrusted the authority of temporal power.

He has written with the fire of a prophet. But now he feels drowsy, and his head nods. He begins a reverie of Worms, and Spires, and Marburg.

The massive head jerks up. Ah, yes, the Turks! He seizes the quill again. But the strain of hard work is asserting itself, and he nods again.

There! Was that Philip Melanchthon calling him? No; the voice was softer, like a gentle purr.

"Martin!"

Luther looks up. It is late in the afternoon, near November. Who is that standing over there near the door? A monk in the garb of the Augustinian order. Luther smiles.

"Brother Martin!" the voice pleads.

"What is it, brother?"

"I have come to advise you. You are making a big mistake."

"Are you with us or against us," asks the voice that is feared by princes.

"I want to advise you for your own good. You are making a big mistake."

"What mistake?" Even the voice seems to bristle.

"Martin, Martin! You are a good man, and a prophet. But you don't know much of the ways that lead to victory. You are as innocent as a dove, but in addition you ought to be as wise as a serpent. You know that is the great injunction.

"Now, look here!" The visitor draws nearer.

It is growing darker. The eyes of Luther are strangely luminous.

“Here you are preparing a sermon against the Turks,” the velvet tones proceeded; “and really they are your friends. So long as the Turks batter against the walls of Christendom, the emperor cannot carry out the decree of Worms and the wishes of the Pope. The Lutheran heresy—he smiled understandingly—has a chance to take deeper root and grow and spread so long as the crescent can keep the cross busy. And here you are urging your countrymen, even the Protestants, to fight with the emperor against the Turk. Pardon me, Martin; but that is foolish of you. A great man like you ought to be more of a general. You could afford to send secret emissaries to encourage Solyman and his generals.”

Luther fumbles the ink bottle.

“Look at the king of France,” the visitor continues. “He is a shrewd man. His aim is to weaken the power of the emperor, and to that end he befriends the Protestants of Germany. Personally he does not like you and your friends. His heart is Catholic. In his own country he would look with scant favor upon the heresy, as they call it. But he knows that the German Protestants are a thorn in the emperor’s side, and he is taking pains to keep the point as sharp as pos-

sible. That is diplomacy. Francis has penetration."

Luther is breathing heavily. The air is thick.

"And your cause is greater far than the cause of Francis of France. Your end would justify all means."

Luther is bending over, as though suddenly recognizing his adviser. The visitor's voice softens down to a whisper.

"And you understand, Martin, nobody need to know of the commission excepting one or two trusted men."

With a jerk Luther rises, and flings the ink bottle at the satanic intruder. A crash wakes him. Bewildered, he hears his Katie chiding, as she points to a black spot on the wall.

MAKING TIME



HE speedometer and the clock had a quarrel, as the automobile was standing near the curb.

"You just keep time," nagged the speedometer.

"I'm up to the minute," the clock defended.

"Yes, but you just keep on ticking in the same old way, no matter how fast men drive."

"What do you do?"

"I measure their speed. They never go ahead of me. I keep up with them. They can't go too fast for me."

"They never get ahead of me," echoed the clock.

"Never get ahead of you? Why, you are not keeping up with the times."

"The times never get ahead of time. It takes time to keep up with the times."

"You are trying to be funny."

"No, I am serious. You register speed; I register time. You keep up with men's leisure or hurry. I keep up with the great clock God established in the heavens. And they never get ahead of that. Some time or other they must come to time. People are speeding through life, but they are not making time."

"I see you are a preacher."

"What you see is mostly second-hand preaching. But study me, and you will hear the sun, moon, and stars preaching through me."

"I think I can figure out what you mean."

"I am reminded of a story my grandmother told me. It was a fine old pendulum clock, an excellent timepiece. It kept time like a sun-dial. One day the little boy of the house unscrewed the weight of the pendulum, just to see what would happen. And the pendulum hurried like mad. The second-hand sped around. Also the minute-hand. The boy could even see the hour-hand moving.

" 'Mother,' he cried, 'come and see the clock making time.'

"But the mother chided the boy. She knew that the clock was out of time. The heavenly bodies, morning, noon, and night, summer and

winter, pursued their stately way in spite of the mad haste of the clock."

"It had lost its weight."

"Exactly. And just so men that hurry through life in a mad rush have lost their weight. They disregard those eternal things of the soul that lend weight to life. They may be Jabals, Jubals, and Tubal-cains, but they lack the balance-weight that keeps them in time with eternity. They are out of harmony with God as the clock was out of harmony with the sun."

"Then, if men were in harmony with God, you and I would have no quarrel."

"No."

The conversation stopped, for the master of the car hurried out of the house, and quickly stepped into the machine. His hands trembled as he cranked the car and drove off. The clock smiled sadly as he saw the haste of the moment recorded not only on the speedometer, but in the nerve-centres of the man's system, to be accounted for in days to come.

ELIJAH



HE dry reeds crackled as they parted, and startled the ravens. Elijah looked up, and saw a bland and courteous face that seemed out of harmony with the wild scenery of the Cherith. He dimly remembered. As the man stood before him, his dress announced a courtier from Samaria.

The stranger smiled, while Elijah's features remained adamant. What good news could be expected from the court of Ahab and Jezebel?

"Don't you remember me?" the courtier began ingratiatingly. "Don't you remember Ethbaal Ben Joseph, the friend of your boyhood? My father married a woman of Sidon. Don't you remember?"

Elijah nodded his head. He remembered. How hateful the marriage had been to his people! But since then—why, even the king had married

a Sidonian princess. Something in Elijah's attitude made Ethbaal keep his distance. He did not, however, lose his composure.

"You remember how we roamed together over the fields of Tishbe," he continued. "And the hills of Naphtali. And you, even you, loved to hear my mother tell of Sidon and its wonderful ships."

Elijah trembled.

"Now, listen, Elijah." He took a step nearer. "I want to tell you something. And for the sake of our friendship and the great cause of Israel, I hope you will attend and be reasonable."

The prophet's silence was not encouraging. Yet the speaker continued.

"I have come from the queen."

Clouds gathered on the forehead of the prophet, and his eyes flashed lightning.

The messenger sat down in the shade of a rock.

"Now don't look so angry, Elijah," he said suavely. "Really, the queen thinks a great deal of you. Your sterling loyalty to the cause you represent commends itself to the favorable attention of everybody who is at all able to appreciate the finer things of life. And you may be sure her majesty is able to do that. Elijah, she is one woman in a million. It is too bad that two strong char-

acters like you and the queen are opposed to each other. It isn't natural. You two ought to work together."

He paused.

Elijah was studying the thin rills of the brook.

"If you knew her better, Elijah, you would admire her, believe me. She is the daughter of a great king, and she is greater than her father. She comes of a nation that is known for brilliant daring, and I believe she is as brilliant as any of them. She is a good queen. You ought to see what she does for religious worship. Her prophets and priests do not suffer want. Ah, you ought to see her, Elijah, when she appears at court functions. She loves jewelry, but she is the jewel. The king is all right, too. Mind you, I'm not saying anything disloyal of him. But the queen—!"

Elijah beckoned the ravens, but they would not return.

"That woman could rule a nation ten times as large. Thousands are willing to die for her. It is too bad you misunderstand her. I am sure if you understood you would relent. Think of what good you could do if you came to her court. By and by you would reform us all. There would be rain; the land would prosper; and you could

be the court preacher of righteousness. Think of it! I am authorized to say" (he raised his voice and gesticulated significantly) "that such a position would be open to you. There you could prophesy unmolested, even in Samaria, and work until the worship of Baal would gently merge into the worship of Jehovah.

"Now you are just protesting. You have done that well, and we all admire it, the queen most of all. She admires you, and would like to have you nearer to her. So would Ahab, of course. Mere protesting does little good. Come to Samaria; eat the queen's bread; and work for a real reformation."

He was cowed by Elijah's terrible look. However, he soon recovered. He was a seasoned man.

"As to the religion of the queen, Elijah, you must take a broad view of those things, don't be narrow, old boy. I'm half and half, you know; half Sidonian and half Israelite; and I am naturally inclined to take a broad view of things. Besides I like to ponder the deeper meanings of religious rites and beliefs. Now there are Baal and Ashtoreth. They are not just images and groves. We must go deeper. Baal is the sun-god, and Ashtoreth the moon-god. The images represent them. And sun and moon? Why, they represent the great Spirit that controls them. 'The heavens

declare the glory of God,' you know. You see the Phoenicians are not all wrong. One only has to look for the spiritual meaning of their rites. No religion is all wrong. I say we must try to find the good that's in them. And then start with that, and gradually develop it into something higher and purer. And you can trust the queen to help you if you come to court.

"Of course, some of those rites are too—interesting; but by and by—oh, you could do a lot! Just let the people feel that you're no kill-joy, but that you'd like to give them the finer joy. Something like that. That would do more than just pouting out here in the wilderness and letting the country go dry."

Elijah's voice was terrible.

"Thus said the Lord," he roared.

The reeds crackled again, and Ethbaal was gone.

And the ravens returned to comfort the prophet.

THE DRUMMER'S DISAPPOINTMENT



HE drummer sat down and studied his surroundings with the air of a man whose profession trains the eye as well as the tongue.

They were somewhat unfamiliar surroundings. He felt he had lost touch. And yet they gave him a homely thrill. They reminded him of the days of childhood and youth, when he went to church with his parents and when his attendance at Sunday school often received honorable mention.

What made him come to this convention of the Loyal League? What business had he, the busy drummer, in a gathering of Christian workers?

Well, it was that letter. A letter from his wife, in which she had told him that the Rev.

Dr. Manville would speak at the convention of the Loyal League in Sanitown on the 26th of November, and as he expected to "make" that city at about that time, she would like to have him go and hear him.

"He is fine, George," she added. "He spoke in our church a few months ago, and I can never forget him. He is a man of deep spirituality, with just enough wit and humor to relieve the tension. Try to hear him, at all events."

That was the main reason for his presence. There were other reasons. He was fond of wit and humor. To be sure, he no longer made a collection of "good" stories; he was sick of them; but he still liked a fine joke. And that was not all. "A man of deep spirituality." Some people seem to think a drummer doesn't care for such a thing, that he just wants to be gay.

He muttered something to himself to express his opinion of such inadequate estimates. Just one word. It was not at all to the point; in fact, it was senseless. But it was the name of a very definite theological locality.

At any rate, he was here and he had come to hear Dr. Manville. His train would not leave until half past ten, and if he left the meeting at ten oclock, he would be able to "make" it, especially as he was staying at the Howard House,

which was close to the station. So he settled down for a treat.

The meeting was to have begun at eight o'clock, but it was fifteen minutes later when the leader faced the congregation with a broad smile and said they would have a season of song as the people seemed to be slow in coming. The singing was lusty, and the people came.

At half past eight the leader rose to introduce the Rev. Mr. Catte, who was scheduled to conduct the devotional exercises. The name gave the chairman an excellent opportunity to tell a few good stories of the diminutive feline, which were received with mirthful applause, and Mr. Catte replied in kind. It was twenty minutes of nine when the devotions began. They were impressive and prepared the drummer for Dr. Manville.

Then the leader rose, winked and smiled, and introduced the convention treasurer. Some of the girls giggled, and a number of persons fumbled for their purses.

The treasurer was famously facetious, and he lived up to his reputation. The drummer was, of course, glad to make his contribution, but he glanced at his watch. The collection being over, he looked up expectantly.

The chairman smiled again, and congratulated the convention on having with it that eve-

ning the Honorable John Moulton Smith, ex-governor of a neighboring state, and he was sure the audience would be pleased to hear from him. The secretary clapped his hands, and the convention echoed a rousing applause. Governor Smith was a distinguished looking man, a man of prominence, especially as to nose and voice.

He began by apologizing for the cold in his head, adding that a susceptibility to colds had been a weakness in his family for generations, but that it had never affected the temperature of the heart. (Applause.) Then he expressed his delight with being permitted to address so happy and handsome an assembly, which statement evoked a response of gratification. After that he launched out upon the subject of his address: Thrift Stamps. If he was as generous in investing his money in Stamps as he was in giving time to the audience, he was certainly a paragon of patriotism, and the leader did not have the heart to stop an ex-governor.

It was half past nine when he got through. Then followed a hymn. After that, the presiding officer announced that his keen eye had detected an old friend of the cause in the audience, Joseph O'Leary, and he felt the evening would not be complete without a word from Joe.

So Joe came to the platform and held forth.

He was utterly unprepared, and for a while he floundered. Then he happened to think of his experiences in the trenches, and the tickling rill of his oratory became a wide stream. The leader called his attention to the fact that his time was up, but Joe replied that for a full year, in the army, he had to obey, and that he made up his mind, once out of service, he would not take orders from anybody for another full year. This retort pleased the audience immensely, and the chair was defeated.

Joe, however, was considerate, and stopped at ten minutes of ten.

The drummer looked for his hat and overcoat. As he went up the aisle, the congregation sang two verses of "On to Victory." He paused near the door long enough to hear the introduction of Dr. Manville. More than that. Although it was a few minutes after ten, he lingered. Too bad! What he saw and heard, was just enough to whet his heart hunger. He wished he could stay, but he had to "make" the train.

WHEN HE OMITTED SHADRACH'S ORATION



HE Rev. John Bell was at work in his study, preparing a sermon. He was a young man, with a young man's optimism, and a confidence that bordered on conceit. Would he make a success of this church? He had no doubt of it. Had he not drawn encouraging audiences almost every Sunday since his arrival at Marston? And that was three months ago. To be sure, he lately had felt the prick of disappointment once or twice. But his enthusiasm had not yet been chilled. And the sermon he was finishing would certainly make a great impression.

"I think this ought to make a hit," he mused, lapsing into the vernacular. "The story of the three men in the fiery furnace is full of the dramatic."

He read aloud his version of the dialogue between the young Hebrews and Nebuchadnezzar. He had liberally amended the Bible record. Why not? Is there not homiletic license as well as poetic license? When he reached the final defiance of the Hebrews to the king's command, he put into the mouth of Shadrach an oration which savored of Burke and Patrick Henry. Nor was he satisfied merely reading this to himself. He rose to the occasion, halted before a man-size mirror, and tried the doubtful experiment of studying his oratorical fervor with calm and careful criticism.

He was satisfied with himself. Turning from the mirror he faced an imaginary audience crowding his little church. And let it be credited to the creative faculty of the brother that he was as satisfied with his imaginary audience as his imaginary audience was satisfied with him.

He was so enthusiastic that he gave an outline of his sermon to Deacon McKnight, whom he met on the street.

"Fine," ejaculated the deacon. "Wish I could be there to hear it."

"You'll not be there?"

"No; I'm sorry to say. My wife's folks are going to spend the week end with us, and it will be hard for me to get away. By the way, did you see Benson's new car? He'll be a speeder before

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long." Falling back upon Benson's car was not retreat but strategy.

John Bell was not much disturbed by the announced absence of his substantial deacon. He would like to have him present, to be sure, but one man could well be missed. He was so elated over the prospective hit that he was hardly aware of the beautiful spring weather that set in toward the end of the week. And thus dawned a glorious Sunday. The evening before he had once more gone over his sermon, and during the night he had dreamed of Nebuchadnezzar, whom he had seen very distinctly, though with some occidental admixtures.

Alas, alas! The church was not filled to suffocation. The service was not even well attended. It was no distraction for the minister to count his audience. There were thirteen hearers present and some of them were not hearers throughout the entire discourse. His delivery was spiritless, and Shadrach's speech of defiance was omitted. He was not disconcerted by the number thirteen. One less would have made him feel just as bad. How can a man deliver to empty benches a sermon he has prepared for an expectant audience filling the church?

"Where are the people?" he asked after he had agonized through the service.

"Oh, they are out in their machines, or playing tennis, or entertaining friends. Never mind. You'll get used to that all right. They did the same thing to your predecessor. The first few months they came out of curiosity, but the attendance soon settled down to 'normal.' Our folks aren't stingy in their contributions, but they're not strong on going to church. But you'll get used to that all right."

And he did get used to it. Let it be admitted with shame, he did get used to it. At first, his heart rebelled, but by and by, slowly, imperceptibly, there stole into his soul the deadly spirit of "What's the use?" His sermons were prepared with ever less thought. Who cared? He became known as the most genial clergyman in town. A common saying had it that the Rev. Mr. Bell was idolized by his people, but that they seldom went to church.

THE CURE



R. Mortimer Mindfull had a theory that he could not sleep, and theories are stubborn things. It made him feel very bad. For one thing, his reputation was at stake. Until about a month ago, he had been an excellent sleeper, and his wife, with fine sarcasm, entirely and solely actuated by her love for him, as she averred, had often advised him to enter a Marathon sleeping race, predicting easily won laurels, unless the judges insisted upon noiseless engines.

Besides, he realized the insomnia would undermine his health. The cause of the deplorable condition, which preyed upon his mind, had not yet been ascertained, although several experts were working on the case. One said coffee; another, after exhaustive interrogations going back about six generations, was sure it was the after-

effect of bibulous indulgences of an ancestor. Let it be said, however, that they did not spend too much time on the investigation of possible causes; rather did they proceed vigorously to experiment with probable remedies.

The tonics and nerve exercises, the latter very taxing, such as describing circles and semi-circles with the index finger without a jerky movement, had so far been of no apparently beneficial effect, mainly because Mr. Mindfull was impervious to suggestion. His wife would assure him that he had slept, but he always triumphed by affirming he was positive she had been sleeping the whole night through.

“How could I know that if I had slept? I tell you I didn’t sleep.”

And she was quiet. That was victory for him, to be sure; but his song of triumph, sung to a tune of his own, always ended in a minor key, to the words: “I know I have not slept for a month.”

One night, he heard a voice calling him, about two thousand three hundred and sixty-five miles away. He listened; he listened intently. Was this one of the mysterious messages from Mars he had been reading about, or was there something in spiritism after all?

The voice spake again. It was calling him.

Now it seemed much nearer. He strained his ear. Then he heard it again. He started from his pillow, for this time it was close to him.

"For goodness' sake, didn't you hear that door-bell?" It was not a spirit; or rather, it was a spirit that was very dear to him.

"Door-bell!" he echoed, in a very unspiritual way, though nevertheless spiritedly. "What are you talking about? I ought to have heard it. You know I don't sleep."

"Well, it did ring. Get up and see who is there!"

"Now, my dear—"

He was going to say a good deal more, and the "dear" was like the icing on devil cake, but just at that moment the door bell gave forth a clear, sharp call to duty.

Mr. Mindfull ejaculated something that drowned the "I told you so" of his wife. This was very unchivalrous, for what will become of the human race if man becomes so coarse as not to bow in dignified acquiescence to woman's "I told you so."

At any rate he slipped into his slippers, hastily donned Mrs. Mindfull's dressing gown, and descended the stairs. We had better say he stumbled down the stairs, for he had a hard time keeping the hem of his garment above his ankle and

the sleeves from reaching out beyond his hands. The gown completely enveloped his body, and the messenger boy was reminded of some of the pictures he had seen in a History of Rome.

The telegram was important, but not enough to throw Mr. Mindfull into hysterics. Even his poor, tantalized nerves stood the test. In fact, after he had turned it over to his superior who claimed she had a right to know, his thoughts reverted to the insomnia problem.

He certainly must have been asleep. Mrs. Mindfull's contention had been confirmed by the statement of the messenger that he had rung the bell twice.

Now what had he been doing when the bell rang the first time? He must have been sleeping. He could not deny it. And yet he had been sure of not having slept for a month. And if he had been mistaken in this instance, why not in others? It was quite possible that he had been sleeping more than he thought he had. That certainly was comforting. His health was not as bad as he thought it had been. In fact, he felt better. His condition seemed to be much more hopeful. The obsession of a month felt the expulsive power of a new conviction. Something seemed to dissolve in Mr. Mindfull's brain; something seemed to relax. Then again there was a fusing. He was conscious

of levitation. He was being wafted through a million or more miles of purest ether. It all lasted just a minute or two when a voice brought him back to the realities of blankets and pillows.

“For goodness’ sake, stop your snoring. It’s time to get up, anyhow, and look after the furnace.”

He opened his eyes, blinked, and saw it was daylight.

He knew he was cured.

GOING HOME



certain man had a large family. And he had said to his son, "You see there are too many of us. You are strong and bright, and the world is full of opportunities."

And not many days after the son left his home. He traveled many miles, and found a position in a distant city.

He worked hard, and became wealthy.

When, after fifteen years of incessant toil, he took a vacation, he heard the cow-bells in the meadow, and he longed for the old home.

He said to himself, "I'm going home."

Then he thought of the riches, and he added, "And I am going to dazzle them with my wealth."

And he journeyed home in a fine limousine, enjoying all the comforts that money can buy.

But when they left the state-road, and he saw

an old chimney rise above the brow of the hill, he said to the chauffeur, "James, you stay here with the car. I am going to walk home."

He took off his coat, and he did not mind the dust of the road. He would fain have bathed his feet in the brook and walk home barefoot.

He felt like crying, "Father, mother, I don't want to come back to you as the wealthy man; I want to come back to you as your boy."

When he reached home, his brother did not recognize him; but the mother rushed out of the kitchen and called him by a pet name of his childhood, which he had forgotten. He dropped his hat and his coat to rest in her arms. And the father came out of the barn, and his heart was in his hand.

It was long before he remembered James.

Likewise we want to forget the daubles of life when we approach the Father, and just be His child.

A YOUTHFUL FANCY



HE rich young ruler had grown old. He still had great possessions; more than ever. He was resting on the roof of his country home, in the shade of a curtain of rare design. He was charmed with the view of fields and groves and mountains, and the blue waves of the sea. So were the servants, but they did not dare to take their eyes off the master.

A messenger arrived and salaamed low.

“Jehovah is good, my master,” he exclaimed. “Thy ships have reached the harbor of Joppa, and all is well.”

And while he was yet speaking, there came also another.

“Jehovah is with thee,” he greeted. “Thy caravan was attacked by Arabians, but thy men beat them off, and only Nahum was slain. The spices are safe, and not a camel was lost.”

And while he was yet speaking, there came also another, a craftsman, bearing a parchment roll. He bowed humbly.

"Thy palace on Mt. Carmel is almost finished. The storm that uprooted trees in the park left no mark on the marble. The house is built on a rock."

"House built on a rock? Where have I heard that before?" The eyes of the rich man became dreamy, but not for long. Even while he reflected another messenger arrived. He bowed with courtly grace.

"Hail to thee, master. Good news. Nero has heard of thee. Thou wilt hear from him."

"What other news from Rome, Philip?"

"They are persecuting the Christians."

"The Christians?" With a gesture he dismissed the messengers. "The Christians." His lips scarcely articulated the word. But there came with it a misty recollection of a prophet of Nazareth, whom he had once asked: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

He smiled. "A youthful fancy."

And his mind reverted to the obsession of ships and caravans, and palaces, and Rome.

HE FELT THE STARS LOOKING AT HIM



HE Rev. James Murgatroyed rose on tip-toe and looked for his friend, the Rev. Thomas Spencer. He had seen him come into the minister's Monday conference and had recognized him at once, though they had seen very little of each other since their college days in Wooster.

Now that the meeting was over and the closing hymn was followed by the hubbub of a hundred trained voices greeting one another in pulpit tones, he looked for Tom. Ordinarily he would not have to rise on tip-toe, for he was a tall man; but Tom was a little fellow, and he was bound not to miss him.

"There's a fine little coffee parlor on Broadway, not far from here," Jim suggested after the first ecstasies were over.

Tom agreed, moreover, as he would not dare to interfere with the arrangements of those of his brethren who were evidently born to lead. Saying this, he drew twelve cents from his vest pocket and glanced meaningly up at his friend's athletic height.

Mr. Murgatroyed deprecated with one hand and drew Mr. Spencer out of the crowd with the other.

When they faced each other over the linen that shimmered bluishly in the softened light, Tom began the story of his life, not, however with absolute fidelity to historic consecutiveness. In fact, it was haphazard, now about his revered ancestor who had come over in the Mayflower, and now about his eldest boy, a prodigy. But the desultoriness of the recital did not interfere with the continuity of the flow.

"Hold on a minute," Jim interrupted as the waiter brought the coffee. "I want to tell you something about myself. I may make a change."

"Where to?"

"South Lebanon, Pennsylvania."

"South Lebanon? A suburb of Lebanon; isn't it? On a spur of the Pennsylvania. Am I right?"

"That's it."

"I know that church. I was there at one time when McPherson was the minister."

"McPherson? I never heard of him."

"Oh, that's about ten years ago."

"Oh!"

"I can give you a few pointers on that church. You know the churches in that neighborhood don't change very much."

"I know, the elder, Dr. Bruce, wrote it was a church of established character."

"Bruce? Bruce? No, that's not his name. I'm thinking of an old elder I met there. Let's see. What was his name? I remember him well now. Face like granite and eyebrows like bushes. What was his name? I have it. Burns. That's it. I remember him well. He's very proud of being a descendant of John Knox."

"Is that so?" Murgatroyed returned the cup to the saucer, and while his guest began to dissect and deposit a delicious piece of cake, he wrote on a slip of paper that Burns was a descendant of John Knox.

"What else do you know of the church?"

"Oh, I remember it very well. They have a lot of Dutch people in it. Fine folks they are. Steady as the needle. They're slow in loving a

newcomer, but if they once love him, they'll love him for good."

"Go on. What else?" Murgatroyed made another note.

"There's one man there—good man, too—he's developed a strange fondness for the Old Testament Apocrypha. You'd better read up on Macabees and so forth."

Murgatroyed made a few hieroglyphic dashes.

"Anything else?"

"I can't think of anything just now. Just that they're fine people. Some of them country gentlemen who like to hear about metropolitan life."

They talked on for a half hour, after which Tom plead an engagement. He would, however, be anxious to await Jim's verdict on the congregation as well as the congregation's verdict. He was on his vacation, which he always took in October, and would stay in New York for a few weeks.

When Murgatroyed was back in his study in Newark, he took the history of Scotland from the shelf and began to read the account of the struggle between John Knox and Mary Stuart. Hastily he jotted down his impressions, his imagination creating a South Lebanon audience with

Mr. Burns as the central figure. Under such historic stimulus as was furnished by the scene between the Elijah of the North and the beautiful queen, the sentences rolled off his fountain pen to his own evident satisfaction.

"That isn't bad," he complimented himself after he had read it aloud. "But I think I'll add a few lines from The Cotter's Saturday Night. That ought to impress the old elder."

"And now something to please the Dutch." He turned his revolving book-case for a volume of Motley's History of the United Netherlands. After browsing for a while, his eyes chanced upon the name of William of Orange.

"The very character," he smiled to himself. He read the account of the siege of Leyden, and the heroism of William the Silent made him feel volubly rhetorical. His pen raced over five pages. The flow of ink being occasionally impeded by some temporary defect, the little outbursts of temper as he ejected spouts of ink on the carpet, which fortunately was a linoleum, helped to set his words afire with temperament.

He sighed as he reviewed.

"That's kind o' fine," was his self-felicitation.

He then consulted the Apocrypha. For a while he was undecided as to whether to use the

heroism of Judas Maccabeus driving the Syrian host to cover in five successive victories or the truculent bravery of Judith slaying Holoferness; but, after standing at the window for a minute and vainly looking for an oracle from the scud of the sky, or the passersby scanning the clouds and buttoning their coats, or the jangling street car, he finally decided on Judas as most compatible with the tenor of his other illustrations.

“And now for a bit of Metropolitan life,” he mused. “Well, I can think of nothing better than that parade when the Sixty-ninth came home. First the furled flag and the slow beat of drums. Then the wounded, and at last the endless rows of Young America passing under the Victory Arch. I am sure they did not see anything like that in Lebanon.”

He left the desk and dropped into the Morris chair, where he closed his eyes and endeavored to fuse John Knox and William of Orange, and Judas Maccabeus and the Victory Arch into a composite harmony when suddenly he jerked up with a start.

“Why I haven’t chosen my text yet.”

Some ministers there are, to be sure, who are so audacious as to preach without a text, but Murgatroyed was conservative enough to eschew such ultra-modern escapades. Besides, he was to

preach a trial sermon, and in that case one had better not deviate too much from established custom. So he hunted for and finally succeeded in finding a text that was sufficiently comprehensive and elastic to admit of the use of all of his strategic illustrations.

He had expected to leave on Friday, but a funeral service detained him, so that he did not start until Saturday morning, and the change of trains at Harrisburg caused a delay of several hours. However, the trip was delightful, and his mind alternated between noting the beauties of the scenery and allowing his thoughts to drift into random but fine dreaming, which, also, was a preparation for the morrow's work.

It was dark when he arrived. Dr. Bruce, his host, had received the telegram and met Mr. Murgatroyd at the station. The pleasure was mutual, and the Franklin car—which was new, for the doctor had recently married—soon brought them to the cottage whose chimney waved the smoke plume of welcome at the minister.

He had little opportunity to draw information from his host, for the doctor had to excuse himself several times to attend to patients. Besides, the trip had made him tired and he longed to go to bed.

From the window of his bed-room he saw a

lane of cottages, and at the end of it a church whose spire was outtowered by the mountains in the distance. Here and there lights were blinding through the trees on the hillside, and he felt the stars looking at him. Nature seemed to have pressed her finger to her lips, saying to the stranger: "Be still, and know." He forgot about Scotland and Holland and the Macabees. Rather did he have a touch of the mystic feeling of them that gained all by yielding all.

In the morning, however, he awoke to the necessities of the campaign. At the breakfast, he adroitly, as if casually, questioned Mrs. Bruce, a young woman of promising proportions and willing confidences.

"I understand, Mrs. Bruce, quite a number of your members are of Dutch descent; I mean Hollanders." Thus he began to find his range.

"Why, no; not many," his hostess answered musically. "There's the Van Steens, the Hornes, and the Arembergs. Nice people. The Van Steens will come to church in their new automobile, I guess. Mr. Van Steen is in the real estate and lumber business, and the doctor tells me he has mining interests. Now, the Arembergs." She stopped, for the minister had stopped eating and stared at her.

"Will you have another cup of coffee, Doctor?" she asked solicitously.

"No, thank you, Mrs. Bruce," he replied with less color in his voice. "But tell me, is Mr. Burns, the old elder, still living? A friend of mine told me about him."

"Mr. Burns?" She shook her head. "There is a Mr. Burns here, but he is just a recent arrival. He's working for the Standard Oil Company. Very pleasant man to meet, and an elegant dresser. But he is a young man."

Murgatroyed wiped his forehead with his napkin.

"No; that can't be the Mr. Burns my friend referred to. He must be an old man now, and he is very proud of being a descendant of John Knox."

Mrs. Bruce laughed. Such a melodious laugh.

"Now I understand. That's Mr. Jonathan Burns of the East Lebanon church. Ours is the South Lebanon church, you know. Your friend must have confused the two churches. Yes, I know Mr. Burns. Everybody within six miles around here knows Mr. Burns. I know him well because the East Lebanon church was my church before I was married. It's a good church, too. And Mr. Burns is a fine man. He wants to have

his own way, that's true, but it's usually a good way.

"If you can stay here a few days you are likely to meet him. And maybe you will meet Mr. Greer, the Sunday school superintendent of East Lebanon. We all liked him, although we used to giggle when in his funny way he would tell us by all means to read the Apocrypha."

The doctor entered.

"Mr. Murgatroyed," he interrupted, "I don't want to hurry you. But if you would like to say a word to the Sunday school before the church service, I think we shall have to get ready to go."

"Certainly," the minister answered, like one in a daze.

Excusing himself, he went up to his room. He closed the door and dropped into a chair. There he sat for fully five minutes and stared at the washbowl, or rather through the washbowl to something far away. Slowly he took the sermon from the pocket of his Prince Albert coat, glanced at a few pages, and then deposited the carefully prepared manuscript in his suit case.

But why not preach the sermon? What if the Scotch heir to greatness was not there? What if the Dutch were in a small minority? What if the church was different from what he had been

led to presume? Did not those illustrations admit of cosmopolitan application? Up and doing!

No; he could not. The disappointment had torn something from his eyes. He was disgusted with the worldly strategy in writing the sermon. A voice within, to be sure, reminding him that even ministers may be wise as serpents, and to please all men in all things that they may be saved had a noble precedent; but he shook his head. He felt the stars looking at him again.

He rose, donned his coat, and after an inadvertant glance at the mirror, descended the stairs.

The children in the Sunday school he told the incident of a little girl, poorly clad, who had looked wistfully up at the train when it stopped for a few minutes near a hamlet. Somebody took an interest in her and handed her an apple out of the window. She stammered thanks and then asked her benefactor to please cut it in two so as to enable her to share it with a companion who looked just as ill-fed.

He wondered what he would preach about. He knew he could not deliver the sermon he had prepared. He knew he was above it. That was not his message; certainly not for today. But what would he say?

As the organist played the prelude, a text

flashed through his mind which years ago had become one of the anchor passages of his life: "The Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." It was surprising how quickly the skeleton was formed and how rapidly it was covered with living flesh. He preached on the beauty of sacrifice. He began with the Victory Arch and the returned soldiers marching under it. He spoke of the thousands who had laid down their lives, of the cross bearers of all ages, of Livingstone's heart buried in Africa; and in the second part he painted the holy beauty of the Man of Sorrows. It was a soul yielding to inspiration and pouring itself forth to self-forgetful abandon.

Six months later, a school teacher told him he had made three grammatical errors in that sermon, but she had not become aware of them until the following day.

He stopped without a formal conclusion. The professor of homiletics would have criticized, and the eyes of his hearers seemed to say: "Go on." He could not go on. He had painted the cross until he saw it, and he felt like worshiping. He bowed his head and prayed.

CHEAP



ANNOUNCEMENT was made by the chairman that the state convention would meet at Charlottesville, and that it would be well to have the society represented. Would not somebody volunteer?

"The fare is fifteen dollars for the round trip, and the total expenses will amount to about twenty-five dollars." He spoke as one having authority.

There was a pause, and much silent thinking.

"I wouldn't mind going," thought Sam Browne. "Must be great. Fine trip, too. But twenty-five dollars would make a dent in my bank account." According to the expression on his face he would have qualified for the position of certified expert of income-tax intricacies. An expenditure of twenty-five dollars, especially for altruistic purposes, was a serious matter.

"I'd love to go," mused Flossie Perkins. "Nice to meet a lot of nice people. But I'd rather have that mauve dress I saw in Madame Trudeau's window today. The one with the Nile-green trimmings." She looked adoringly up at the ceiling, and then more adoringly at the mirror in her purse.

"I guess it's up to me," the president said to himself. "But business first, and we're too busy."

Then Old Faithful rose.

"Well, if nobody else goes, I guess I'll go," she said simply. She was tall and strong. Her friends remarked about two of her habits, for she was mature enough to have a few mixed habits. One was her smile that would come unexpectedly and endow the serious cast of her features with a beauty that was distinctly spiritual. The other was a way she had of brushing her dark hair from her forehead. It stood for clearing the deck and getting ready for action.

Her decision was applauded. The members nodded to one another, as though saying, "You might know."

Old Faithful was popular, especially with the younger set, whom she had often helped in preparing papers and other work. It was strange what fun a person could have doing serious work when Old Faithful helped. She was still young.

Friend and not-friend would have resented any intimation of her being an old maid. In fact, some believed she would always remain young.

John Raymond asked for the floor. He was a recent accession to the society, but a keen observer through glasses that glistened immaculately.

"Mr. Raymond has the floor."

"Well, I just want to say, that is, I just want to say, that I think—of course, that's just my idea, you know—I think anyhow that we ought to pay the delegate's expenses, at least her fare."

There was a pause for twenty-three seconds, and much violent thinking. This was followed by earnest whispering, frilled with giggles.

Then Sam Browne arose. He squared his shoulder, caressed an early clearing on the top of his head, and looked for a moment as though he might release a Patrick Henry oration. In a most unparliamentary manner, however, he turned on the nervous Mr. Raymond.

"Are you going to furnish the money?" he blurted.

Mr. Raymond blushed.

"Why, no," he stammered. "I thought, that is, I thought, we might take the money out of the treasury; or else it seems to me, anyhow I think

so, it is just my opinion, we might chip together out of our own pockets."

It was evident Mr. Raymond needed two feet to stand on. He tried very hard to stand on one foot only, first one and then the other, but the attempt proved a complete failure. When he sat down he wiped the beads of moisture from his brow with Mrs. Manning's veil instead of his handkerchief, which did not add to his popularity.

The meeting resolved itself into a committee of the whole without consent of the chairman. The latter turned to the secretary for advice but on seeing her pretty teeth try to bite the pencil in two, while her eyes studied invisible stars and her hair curled rebelliously, he forgot about the meeting for a moment; even two moments.

Above the subdued surf of animated discussion could be heard the voice of Flossie Perkins.

"If it comes to having the expenses paid, I guess there are others."

She said it in a whisper that was distinctly heard by the cat which had strayed into the room through the window and now blinked at the meeting from the sill. When she heard the last remark, she washed herself vigorously.

At last order was restored, partly through the efforts of the chairman who had "come to" and now pounded the table with a fist that was used to

wielding a heavy fountain-pen, and partly by the voice of Old Faithful. The latter part was four fifths.

"I move to lay this matter on the table," she said. She cleared her forehead for a few impertinent wisps, and her eyes looked more penetrating than ever. "Or better, since there was no motion, let us fire it under the table and forget it. I'm going to pay my own expenses.

"And now, while we're talking about money, let me speak to you of the Tenement Fund. We must not forget it. The need is great."

She talked on, and they listened. Sam Browne admired her with eyes and purse. Presently he took out his note-book and pen.

When Old Faithful had finished, he rose and asked for the floor. The chairman assured him of that privilege, realizing the futility of refusing, in view of the fact that Sam took possession of a considerable portion of the floor wherever he stood.

Sam did not merely rise; he rose to the occasion.

"There was no motion made to pay the delegate's expenses," he began, "and for that reason we cannot well do anything about it; that's sure. But I don't think we ought to let the chance go by without doing something. Not only say nice

things outside, but do something right here. Yes, Mr. Chairman, do something." (The chairman nodded vaguely.) "And therefore I move to adopt the following resolution:

"We, the members of this society, convened for a regular meeting, on this twenty-fifth day of October, in the year of our Lord 1923, do hereby and herewith seriously and earnestly express our high appreciation of the noble, unselfish, self-denying, and splendid services rendered this society by our much-beloved delegate to the state convention, and we wish her happy and glorious hours and days on the trip and at the convention."

"Second the motion," trebled and bassed a number of voices. The enthusiasm was unanimous, and the resolution was carried without a dissenting vote.

The cat, however, yawned, sang a sad song of one note, and leaped out of sight.

MORE TIME FOR HERSELF



RS. Sperry sighed.

“It is work, work, work, from morn to night. I haven’t a moment for myself. Housework certainly is slavery. Why don’t those men of genius think of something to make life easier for us? Here the minister tells us to spend at least a half hour in quiet communion every day. But how will I get in the half hour? And servants are expensive—when you can get them.”

That evening her husband announced that he would have electricity installed, and would make her a present of one of the improved electric sweepers.

Well, it was great, and Mrs. Sperry was delighted. It was such a labor and time-saving invention. Now at last she was able to take in a matinee or two a week.

But the matinee devoured more time than just the performance. There was the dressing, and the hours spent on the way. And then it was absolutely necessary, once in a while, to have a confidential chat with the dressmaker.

"Oh, dear," she sighed. "I wish I had a little more time for myself. Just to be able and sit still and come to myself."

One morning the expressman brought a new device, with the compliments of Mr. Sperry. An electrical dishwasher. Not of the old-fashioned kind that have long been on the market. Something altogether new. A machine that would wash and dry the dishes. All the human hand had to do was to put the dishes into the receiver, fill it with water, cover it up, and turn on the current.

Mrs. Sperry rejoiced. She had no difficulty in persuading her husband to crown his kind benevolences by taking the dishes out of the machine and stacking them away. She convinced him that baby would hold him in higher esteem for being so good to mama.

But why hurry?

"Now I can be in time for the first film in the movie. Mrs. Fudge has often asked me to go with her. Of course, I have been there, but Mrs. Fudge told me I have to be regular to get the real

benefit. She says the movies are so human. They bring the real life close to us."

But she had to hurry, poor woman!

"Oh, dear," she sighed, "this life is killing. Not a moment for myself. My head is in a whirl. And the beautiful pictures so stir my emotion. I just do wish I had a little more time just to come to myself."

A great invention stirred the household world just at that time. Mrs. Sperry read and gasped delightedly.

"Isn't that great?" she exclaimed to her husband, handing him the paper.

He read with increasing interest. It was indeed a wonderful thing. A machine about the size of an oil-stove. It could be carried from room to room. It looked so innocent, but it was filled with chemicals so delicately and dynamically adjusted that when connected with an electric current, they would draw unto themselves and deposit into a refuse pocket every particle of dirt in the room, doing the work of sweeping and dusting. "Easywork" was the name of the clever device. The house-wife would take it into the room, attach the wire, turn on the current, and then leave. In a half hour the room would be immaculate.

It was a marvel. Of course, it was expensive,

but Sperry loved his wife dearly. He knew it would save time and labor, and give his darling a few hours a day more for herself.

When the "Easywork" arrived, he almost regretted being present, for his wife's gratitude was oppressive.

She certainly was happy. It meant so much more time for herself.

And she joined a euchre club.—

Poor Mrs. Sperry!

The name, of course, is fictitious. The real name is humanity.

With every labor, and time-saving invention we become more fretful and restless, and we have less and less time for the one thing needful.

THE WISE ONE



HE Wise One sat in the shade of the palm. Old men said their fathers had told them that the tree was older than the Wise One.

“Did you see Him?” he asked, in a voice that echoed centuries.

“Yes, we did,” the men answered. They were tired. Their feet and sandals were dusty.

“And did you feel the power?”

They smiled; and one of them, a young man, laughed.

“We did just as Martha told us she did,” the spokesman reported. “Each one of us took his turn. We waited until the Prophet was surrounded by a crowd, we came up from behind, we touched the hem of his garment. Just as she told us. But we felt nothing like the power of which she speaks. Benoni, the fool, thought he felt

something, but he is a fool. And he did not do as we told him to do. He listened to the Prophet's words and forgot himself."

The Wise One was silent.

"We were scientific," the spokesman continued. "We tabulated our impressions. And we have come to the conclusion that Martha did not tell the truth. If she felt the power, why did not we? We did just as she told us she had done."

"But how was she cured?"

The spokesman shrugged his shoulders, and his eyebrows hinted at dark powers.

"Did you indeed do as she did?" the Wise One asked again, after a pause.

"Exactly as she told us. We waited until the people thronged about him, then we came up from behind, and we touched the hem of his garment."

The voice of the Wise One became deeper, unearthly.

"And had you felt the need of him?" he asked.

"No," the spokesman wavered. "We were making a scientific investigation." He coughed.

The Wise One dropped his eyes and sat very still. And in the long silence that followed, one after the other of the men stole away.

THE PALE FAITH



R. Hiram Meeke was a devout man. He was the foremost surgeon of Charlton. Nature had endowed him with a love for the mysteries of the human body as well as with a keen eye and a steady hand. But he was interested in other mysteries also. The tension of his daily task was often relieved by indulging in the devotions of the mystics.

He was a man of faith. God would make all things well, he was sure. People loved the tall, spare doctor. His white hair and mustache made him almost venerable, especially when his eyes shone with a deep, deep light.

One evening, after office hours, a committee waited on the doctor. It was a committee of three: Rev. Mr. Beckett of the Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Dr. Burns of the Methodist Church, and Mr. William Atwood, president of

the Atwood and Martin Motor Co. The Martin motors were famous.

Dr. Burns acted as spokesman. With his ready flow of words he urged the doctor to join them in a crusade against the vile performance in the local moving picture theatres.

"They are bad," the reverend gentleman gesticulated. "They are vicious when they are openly obscene, and they are insidiously bad when they assume a sentimentally good appearance. You know it is true, doctor. And something has to be done, unless we are willing to forfeit our reputation for a high standard of decency."

His little, pompous figure grew two inches while he spoke.

Dr. Meeke smiled a beautiful smile, and his eyes feasted on distant verdures.

The Presbyterian minister remained seated. His size was impressive enough even in a chair. He spoke in a matter-of-fact way. His statement was strong and incontrovertible. Something had to be done.

Some people called Mr. Beckett dry. He didn't have much gravy, to be sure, but his meat was always well cooked.

Mr. Atwood was a man of few words. In his younger days, he had been an amateur prize fighter, billed as "Still Bill."

"Better join us," he said, stiffening his jaw. "We need you."

Dr. Meeke came to.

"Do you know," he said mellowly, "I have learned to leave all such things to the Lord."

They argued; they pleaded.

"I am sure," he ended the debate, "that if the Lord wants the 'movies' reformed, He will find a way. I am willing to leave it to Him. If people ask me for my opinion, I shall give it, of course; but otherwise I shall leave it to the Lord."

The men were disappointed, but not discouraged. And through the months that followed they fought hard. They fought an entrenched and determined enemy. But they won. The courts decided in their favor, and the legislature passed a new law ordering a stricter and more competent censorship.

The fighters celebrated in a quiet way. When they returned from the hotel, where they had dined, they met the doctor.

"Well, doctor, we won," doctor Burns hailed him.

The doctor smiled benignly.

"Wasn't I right?" he said. "I told you the Lord would find a way to reform the 'movies' if He wanted to do so."

They stared at him, while he gazed far out

to where abstraction from the realities of life pales into nothing. He cranked his car and drove off.

“Beautiful faith, after all,” Dr. Burns said, as though trying to make himself believe it.

“Beautiful?” questioned his colleague. “Yes, beautiful, but pale.”

Mr. Atwood said nothing, but in his heart he rededicated himself to the faith that had been incarnadined through the service and sacrifice of the last months.

THE BOASTERS



SOMEBODY had thrown the old parasol into a corner of the beach, close to the pier, where, together with boards and posts, between which it was wedged, it formed a perfect shelter from the sun. The spot it covered was damp and moldy and wormy.

Thither stole Worry, the old hag. She loved the spot for its seclusion, and a chat with the parasol was a treat, though they often quarreled. She taunted it with the faded advertisements that were still legible on its sides, though the gaudy colors had faded; and the parasol sneered at the deep furrows in Worry's face. All this, while men and women and children were gamboling in the surf.

"How large is the sun?" the parasol asked.

"Really, I don't know," Worry answered, cau-

tiously, for she knew that it was designing. "I wonder if anybody really knows."

"Is it larger than the earth?"

"Oh, much larger. I heard a man say that it was more than two thousand times as large."

"More than two thousand times as large," it repeated. "Think of how powerful it must be. And yet—"

Was it the breeze from the ocean or pride that made the sides swell?

"And yet what?" Worry sneered.

"And yet I keep the sun away. That powerful being has not touched this spot for months. I kept it away."

Worry was silent. Of course she could not gainsay the claim of the parasol, and it was not envy that silenced her. Rather, was she reminded of her own power.

"I think I am more powerful than you," she contended.

The parasol leered at her questioningly.

"Yes, I am," Worry affirmed. "For I can keep away something more powerful than the sun."

"What?"

"All about us is the love of God. It is just eager to get into human hearts and bless them. There is no sorrow for which the love of God has

not comfort and healing. And yet I can keep it away."

"You? Do you know you sometimes seem very little?"

"Yes. But a little worry can keep the peace of God away. Just as a little thing like you can keep the sun away. Ah, the tales I could tell you. I am very, very old, you know. All over the world, and throughout more centuries than history knows I have done my work. Little Worry! But it robbed men and women of peace."

"Why did they not chase you away?"

"They invited me when their faith was weak, and the longer I stayed the stronger I got."

The sky had grown dark, and in the storm an unusually high wave washed the parasol from its mooring. Worry fled; but she will keep on boasting so long as faith is small.

THE CHURCH



HE keeper of the sacred fire sat by the altar on the mountain, and mused. He was sad.

Day and night the torch bearers came to the altar to light the torches with which to kindle the fires that warmed the homes of the valley and illumined the night.

From his aerie he watched them and saw they were selfish and careless. They thought more of the pretty flambeaux in their hands than the cheer they could bring to others.

The keeper was sad. Oh, that he might go down to warm and brighten the valley. But the fire, the sacred fire! Who would guard it? He dare not let it die.

One afternoon, he noticed gross neglect, for his eye was keen. Fires were left unkindled. He

knew that men would grope in the dark and stumble in the night.

Ablaze with zeal, he seized a torch, tipped it with the holy flame, and hurried down the narrow path. He fought the offenders, and kindled the fires.

Homeward, the hills echoed his praises. He was proud as he reached the height and saw the fires below.

But as he turned to the altar, his heart was chilled.

Alas, the sacred fire had died.

THE SPIRITUAL MAN



H, yes, come right in.

You say you're from the Fairview church. I know that church. It's up on the ridge. Get a fine view from up there. Fairview is right. Hear you have a good preacher up there, too. I hear people talking about your church.

I join your church? Well, no, I'm not that kind of a man. You see I believe in a spiritual religion. I am a spiritually minded man. I have no use for organizations. My soul feeds on a religion that is above all institutions and organizations. No doubt, others need these material helps, but I am above them; I would be hampered by them. You are doing good work, I know, and we are one in the spirit, but I believe in a spiritual religion..

You are glad to meet a spiritually minded man? Thank you.

Why I don't come to church, even though I don't join? Well, it's for the same reason. You see, the highest, the spiritual religion, ought to be above all songs and sermons. Spirit communing with spirit. Others, of course, need the outward helps, some even need pictures and candles, but I—I am a spiritually minded man.

Come for the sake of others? Well, I don't know. I am afraid I'd have to sacrifice too much. It's all right to stoop down to raise others, but when one is used to the more rarified atmosphere—

What's that? Contribute to the cause? Why, my dear, how can you speak of such coarse things as gold and silver after I have explained that I am a spiritually minded man. Believe me, there is too much money and machinery in the church now. Too much reliance upon the market. It is sordid.

“But—”

Ah, there goes the dinner bell. You'll have to excuse me. I am as hungry as a bear; and besides the dinner bell is orders, and we must obey orders, you know. Good-bye. My best wishes.

THE SMILE



ON the roof of his house in Anathoth, the old priest lounged with the air of one who was acquainted with every finesse of comfort. His couch was soft, and the draperies of the canopy were rich. His shrewd face was a study in smiles, befitting the corpulency of his body. Occasionally he reached for the silver cup, and sipped the palm wine like an epicurean. He was an influential man.

Before him stood Jeremiah, the young prophet.

He did not mind the rays of the sun, hot even in the late afternoon. Plain was his garb, and plain the hood, shading lean features, set with luminous eyes. After a glance, a loving glance, at the famous hills of Benjamin, rising in a half circle to the west and northwest, he turned to his host.

The priest sipped and smiled. His voice was musical.

"I asked you to come to me," he began, "because I have something to tell you that is for your own good. You are the son of a priest, and I want to do all I can for you."

The prophet tried to smile in return, but it was hard.

"I want to talk to you like a father," the priest went on. "I want to tell you that you take things too seriously. You look like a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, full of lamentations. You must learn to look at the bright side of things. Don't let the corners of your mouth sag. Learn to smile, smile, smile. Look at me."

He raised the cup, and there was a pause.

"You know I am a man of affairs and responsibilities, and the burdens of my office are heavy. But I have learned to take things as they come. I take them with a smile."

The young man was about to speak, but the priest silenced him with a languid wave of the hand and a deprecating smile.

"Life is sweet," he continued. "Why not enjoy it? Judah is rich and prosperous. There is so much to be proud of, and to enjoy. Of course, there are poor, but there will always be poor."

His fingers and his eyes fondled the cup.

The prophet was silent. He was struggling with a surge of sadness. How could he smile!

How could this priest before him smile! A film gathered over his eyes, illumined by a fire within. The surge found expression.

"The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle dove and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord."

The priest raised his hands. There was an attempt at indignation, but his features hardly lost their bland composure.

"Are you blind?" he expostulated. "Do you not rejoice in the sweeping reformation of our good king Josiah? The high places have been leveled to the ground; the Asherahs have been destroyed; and the altars of Baal broken down; and the vestments of idoltary have been burned in the valley of the Kedron. The black-robed priests of Baal have made way for the white-robed priests of Jehovah. The reformation has reached even Ephraim and Manasseh, for Assyria is weak. Jehovah be praised."

The film in the eye of the prophet glowed as he answered. Was it he that spoke or another?

"Will ye steal, murder, commit adultery, perjure yourselves, and then come into my presence into this house which is called after my name?"

The priest lowered his voice.

"If you are not reasonable, you will be disliked. Already you have lost favor, and the priests are beginning to hate you. We want to keep things smooth, and your ravings are annoying. You go too far. You have prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. That makes me smile. The temple! The home of Jehovah! Impossible! Certainly not while Josiah reigns; and he is young. And if after us—"

He shrugged his shoulders, smiled, and refreshed himself.

Long had the emotions of the prophet been repressed. Now they overwhelmed him. Like one possessed he poured out his predictions.

"I tremble for sorrow. The walls of my heart will break. The enemy comes up in dense, huge masses, like clouds, his chariots rush on like a whirlwind, his horses are swifter than eagles in their flight. Woe to us, we are destroyed."

The flow of fervid eloquence did not cease until the passion had been spent. The sun was setting, and the hills were roseate, but on the face of the prophet perspiration mingled with tears. At last he stood as one waiting for a reply from the couch. When no answer came, he bent over to look. Alas, the priest was fast asleep, an infantile smile on his chubby face.

MR. ALBERG'S WORRY



R. Alberg sank into his Morris chair and furrowed his brow; not with the furrows of concentration, up and down alongside of the root of the nose, but the furrows of perplexity, lengthwise across the forehead. He had reason to be perplexed. His little eyes shifted from floor to ceiling in search of a fulcrum. It was not business that worried him. No, no; his collars and shirts were always immaculate, and he was as punctual as the usual laundryman. Whenever he did have to disappoint a customer, his face would take on so doleful an expression that the accompanying gesture was entirely superfluous. Besides, his sigh seemed to issue from a cavern that fed two hundred pounds of mortal flesh. He was forgiven, and the plaintiff bowed apologetically.

Now, Mr. Alberg's worries were of political nature. Election was near and he did not know for whom to vote. Four candidates were in the field for the mayoralty, and it was hard for him to decide. Not that his case was that of most people who were perplexed because they read the

newspapers. Mr. Alberg read nothing but the real estate news. Some day he hoped to have money enough to make the great venture. His wife would smile at him, but he did not see her benevolent grimace; for he usually had trouble keeping his glasses on his nose. Once indeed he had read about the election. That was in a scrap of a newspaper in which a customer had wrapped his soiled collars. But as it was during working hours he did not get very far, for his wife urged him on in so gentle a tone of voice that the little fox terrier lowered his tail and hunted a corner in the show-window behind the artificial palm whose fronds needed a dusting.

He was worried because interests affecting his vote seemed to clash.

“Now, there’s Deems, the Republican candidate. I ought to vote for him. He’s a member of my lodge. It really won’t do to go against him. Lodge members ought to stick together, and he treated us fine at the last meeting. And he sure does look elegant in his full regalia.

“But then there’s Conner, the Democrat. I wouldn’t want him to know that I didn’t vote for him. He’s a member of my church. I ought to vote for him. Church people ought to do something for each other. Of course, I don’t go to church very often, and Conner don’t either; but

he gave us fifty dollars for our Fair last November, and he put a big 'Vote for Me' in our concert program. He's a good fellow, too. None of these narrow fanatics. My, how he shakes hands with us fellows when he comes around. He's all right."

The little eyes blinked. They looked at the picture of Abraham Lincoln on the old starch calendar. Was the figure of the martyr president growing? The eyes blinked again. No; it was the same old picture.

"Then there is Jack Brace on the Fusion ticket. He's my wife's cousin's gentleman friend. They're not engaged yet, but I guess they will be. I can't slight him. My wife thinks he's a fine man, and if I don't vote for him—well, I may have to hunt another boarding house. I guess he's a fine man at that, and it would be fine to have the mayor of the town in the family. One never can tell. I may get something out of that myself."

That picture of Honest Abe was growing after all. Taller every minute. Looked as though he might step out of the frame any moment. No! It was just an illusion. Yes! He was getting taller, and looking right at Mr. Alberg. No! Yes! No! Yes!

Well, anyhow, there was Harcourt, who was running independently. He used to be a neighbor

of the Albergs on Chestnut Hill. And a good neighbor, too. There was no spite fence between the Harcourts and the Albergs. And Harcourt had sent him a nice letter only the other day asking his support at the polls. And when they met, Alberg had promised in a vague sort of a way. Not a binding promise, to be sure. It was this way. Harcourt was overjoyed to see Alberg, and called him "my dear old neighbor," and introduced him as "one of the best men in town" to a man who was with Harcourt and who looked like a governor. And when Harcourt took Alberg aside and gave him a cigar and asked for his vote, even hinting that he would surely remember his old friends and neighbors, Alberg had answered, "I'll see what I can do for you." And they had shaken hands so cordially that Alberg still felt the warmth of it. He didn't see how he could go back on an old friend like that.

What was that? Abraham Lincoln, six feet four inches tall, leaving the frame of the calendar. With slow stride he steps over to where the laundryman is sitting. He stands before him with searching, melancholy eyes. Alberg feels uncomfortable, aware of being collarless. But, no, that is not what the great Emancipator is gazing at.

The voice is a blending of tenderness and earnestness.

"Why not do right?" the great spirit pleads. "The simple right. Forget yourself. Vote for the man who, in your honest opinion, will serve the cause best. With malice toward none, with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right."

Far, far away, the sound of a bell, as though on a ship sailing the infinite sea. Now again, but much nearer. Again and again. As Mr. Alberg awakes, he hears three more strokes of the clock. He rubs his eyes vigorously, also his nose, and comes to. Yes, yes. He is still in the old room, and Abraham Lincoln is still in the frame. But it is no longer the same room. He has had his vision. The simple right, regardless of social considerations and personal advantages! He looks at the candidates from a different point of view. He has made up his mind to vote right.

From the kitchen comes a voice, musical but masterful.

"John, did you register today? You know, this is the last day."

He jerks up with an exclamation that is complimentary neither to himself nor his wife nor any one else. He has indeed forgotten to register. He has been too busy thinking of possible advantages for himself.

COVERING GROUND



VERETT Leslie Rushgait was a devout man, after his own fashion; and, as this is the country of religious freedom, nobody interfered with him. His companions in the office, to be sure with complacent conspiracy, induced him every Monday morning to relate his Sunday adventures, and his wife regarded him with a puzzling smile as he told his story with glowing eyes. He certainly "could cover ground and make time."

He rose early on this particular Sunday morning. He knew it would be a busy day. After hasty ablutions and hurried attention to Sunday attire he bolted his breakfast in spite of Mrs. Rushgait's protests, and prepared to start off on his trip.

"Why, what are you talking about?" he answered his wife. "I'm going to hear an address

by Dr. Samuel Isaacs, a converted rabbi. He's going to speak on 'The World War in the Light of Canticles.' He's great, I tell you; I wish you could come. Why, he's the same man I told you about a month ago. Don't you remember? I heard him speak on the prophecies of the witch of Endor at that time. Something occult, he called it. I think that's what it was. Maybe I'm mistaken. Maybe it was that Syrian I heard in the afternoon of the same day. I tell you Dr. Isaacs is great. But I'll have to hurry. He addresses the Higher-up Bible Class in the Bronx at nine o'clock."

He did hurry. Elevated to Park Row, and subway to the Bronx. How he chafed at delays! How he condemned Sunday amusements because of the crowded cars and platforms!

He got out at One-hundred-and-forty-ninth Street. After making sure of the direction he struck out vigorously, and soon reached the church. The lecture certainly reflected creditably on the resourcefulness of the rabbi, though much of the time was taken up with the pathetic story of his conversion.

Rushgait thought it was fine. But he had no time to shake the speaker's hand, for the morning service in his own church would begin at eleven. He hardly expected to be there on time.

Nor was he. While the congregation was bowed in prayer, he stood in the vestibule and told the chief usher about Canticles and his plans for the afternoon. The sermon was on the loaves and fishes; and, as the beneficiaries of the miracle had tried to make the Master king, Mr. Rushgait was able to find some connection between the loaves and fishes and Canticles.

Dinner was a hasty affair. Indeed, a slight frown marked the face of the head of the household, for Mrs. Rushgait was not quite ready with the meal when he arrived. However, he controlled himself and spiced the conversation with a few references to great speakers he had heard, all of which was listened to patiently by his wife and rapturously by his daughter, a little girl of ten years.

"Won't you go to Sunday school with me this afternoon?" the little one asked. "Some of the teachers are sick, I know, and you could help."

"Is that so?" He looked up, always reluctant to refuse her. "Well, maybe I will. But I'll have to leave early, I want to hear Dr. Burns in the Fifth Avenue Temple this afternoon. That may be the last chance I'll ever have. They say he's going back to Scotland next week. I couldn't afford to miss that, you know."

He did not stay longer in Sunday school than

absolutely necessary, but he made his presence felt, in fact, so much so that the teachers near him complained they could do nothing with their classes. The lesson was on the parable of the Good Samaritan. Mr. Rushgait gave rein to his imagination as he spoke of the poor victim; he held forth vehemently against the priest; and after he was through with the Levite he found he had no time left for the Good Samaritan.

He excused himself, and ran for the elevated. Arriving at the Bridge, he stumbled down to the subway and manfully checked a Boanergian outburst when he just missed the train. He was late, of course, for the service in the Temple, and he had to stand in a line more than a block long. By and by he was admitted, and even found a seat. The quartette finished, and Dr. Burns began to preach. It was a sermon on the prayer vigils of Christ. The great divine urged the people to take time for the quiet hour.

Toward the close of the impassionate appeal Mr. Rushgait grew fidgety, and he looked at his watch. It was getting late, and he was bound to hear Dr. Boneau at the Y. M. C. A. in Brooklyn. He always got so much out of Dr. Boneau's addresses. So, bowing an excuse to the lady sitting at his side, and kicking over the gentleman's cane next to her, he passed out as quietly as he was able

to do in his hurry. This time it was the subway straight to the Y. M. C. A., and he was in time to hear the last part of the address, including the peroration and the applause. He was thankful for having heard even that. It was, of course, on the League of Nations; and the beauty of the address was that, while the speaker was emphatic on all sides of the question, he really did not commit himself. There was nothing like an attempt to introduce politics into a Sunday afternoon address.

Well, Rushgait was late for supper, although he was out of breath. At first his wife administered a gentle reproof, but on seeing his spent condition she asked him how it all was.

"Fine," he answered. And that was about all he could say.

He had promised his wife to go to church with her in the evening and the time was not far off. So they went, and the little girl was happy to have her father. Rushgait did not hear the entire discourse, for his head was drowsy; but, when the minister quoted a verse from Canticles, his mind began to review the good things of the last twelve hours, and so he thought the sermon a fitting close of a perfect day.

That night he dreamt. He saw the Shulamite, the king, the lad with the loaves, and the Good

Samaritan rushing along in apparently aimless haste until they heard a voice saying, "Be still, and know that I am God."

"What kind of a Sunday did you have yesterday?" he asked his wife the next morning.

"I spent an afternoon in quiet communion," she answered. "It was beautiful, but I missed you."

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